Tristan and the Round Table

Anne Shaver

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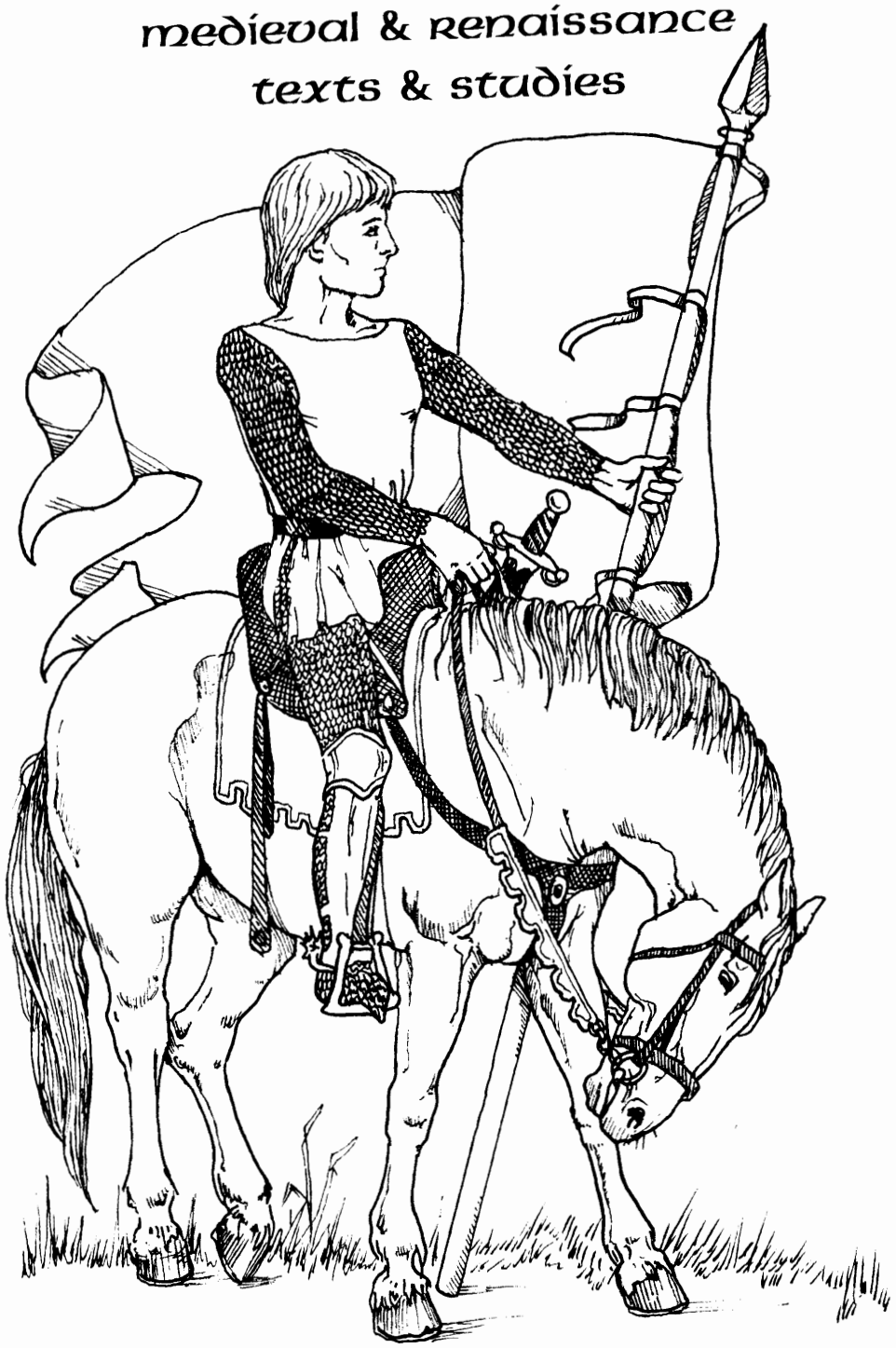

VOLUME 28

Tristan and the Round Table

A Translation of *La Tavola Ritonda*

With Introduction and Notes

by

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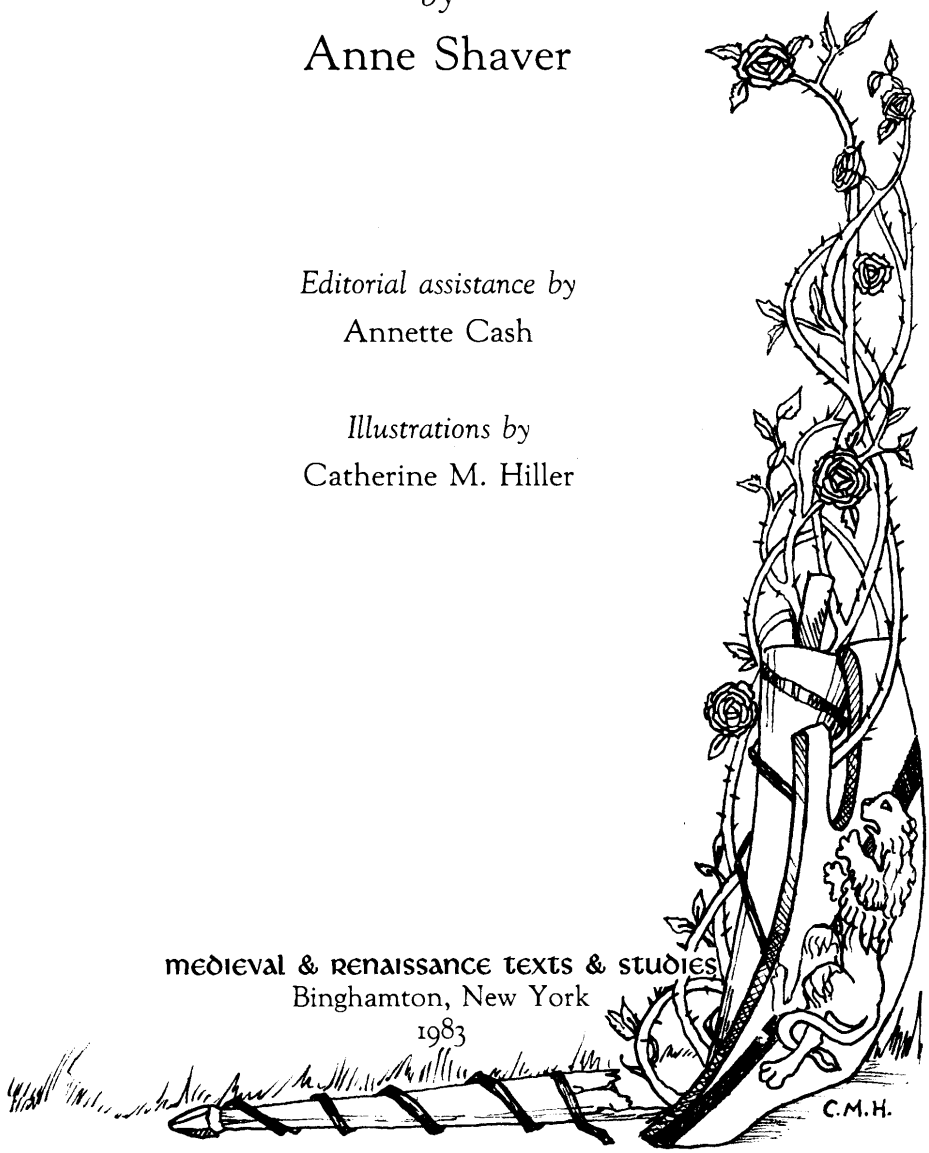

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Introduction

La Tavola Ritonda, written in the second quarter of the fourteenth century,[1] is a relatively late example of the prose tradition in Arthurian literature. It also anticipates a later trend: the fifteenth century's preference for one-volume histories, less encyclopedic than the earlier romances, but still cyclical, including the whole rise and fall of the kingdom of Logres.[2] Thus it is good to compare the *Tavola* in two directions, back toward the French *Tristan en Prose*, which antedates it by more than a hundred years, and forward to Malory, who wrote the *Morte Darthur* in the mid-1400s.

The only complete Arthurian cycle in Italian, the *Tavola* is available in a nineteenth-century edition with an extensive introduction and an appendix.[3] It was edited by F. L. Polidori from three of the eight known manuscripts:[4] the Florentine Mediceo-Laurenziana, Pluteo XLIV, number 27, from the mid-fourteenth century; the Magliabechiana (National Central Library of Florence), Palchetto II, number 68, dated 1391; and a manuscript of the Communal Library of Siena, dated 1468. Polidori explains his choices in his introduction, saying that the Mediceo-Laurenziana XLIV is the oldest version extant, that the Magliabechiana, though poorly copied, is apparently from an earlier source and supplies the matter to fill lacunae in the former, and that the Sienese provides the eleven initial chapters missing in the first two. He has chosen not to use other manuscripts, sometimes because they are imperfect or fragmentary copies of his models,[5] and sometimes because they are not copied in the Tuscan dialect. Not only does Polidori believe that the original story was written by a Tuscan, but he also finds the other Italian dialects inferior to that of Florence and Siena.[6]

In a recent extensive study of the *Tavola*, Italian scholar Daniela Branca validates Polidori's choices, but with reservations. Although she acknowledges that his edition is based on codices commonly considered the best, Branca points out that there are two manuscripts apparently unknown to the nineteenth-century editor: in the Vatican Library, MS. Urbinate lat. 953; and in the Mediceo-Laurenziana, Pluteo XLIII, number 10. A new edition, she feels, should demonstrate a more careful comparison between Polidori's two main sources, and would also need to take into account the close relationship between the first part of the *Tavola* and the earlier Italian *Tristano Riccardiano*.[7] Branca goes on to point out some specific errors in Polidori's

text, saying that although such cases are not frequent, there are enough of them that the edition, while it is good, ought not be considered definitive.

In most older general histories of Italian literature, the *Tavola* is dismissed in a sentence or two as no more than a translation of the French *Tristan en Prose*.[8] Although a simple reading of the *Tavola* makes clear its originality, this has been emphasized only in recent scholarship. Branca's booklength study contains charts of episode by episode comparisons with other texts, both French and Italian, as well as discussion of choices and attitudes peculiar to the *Tavola*'s author.[9] Her work extends that of E. G. Gardner, who had earlier pointed out a number of interpolated stories.[10]

Designating the *Tavola* "the most original of the Italian redactions" of the French Tristan tales, Christopher Kleinhenz sees its creation as a fourfold process: literal translation from a definite source, free translation from a definite source, compilation from several sources in a manner literal or free, and interpolation of episodes with no known sources, episodes which might be free inventions.[11] Kleinhenz focuses on the character of Dinadano to show how the author of the *Tavola* recreates to suit his own attitudes and the Italian national character, more practical and less courtly than the French.

Joan Ferrante's study in *The Conflict of Love and Honor* highlights the *Tavola*'s social emphasis, claiming that the main concern of its author is "to show how an individual's actions, no matter how personal, affect other people and even events in a way he cannot control."[12] She sees a structural principle beyond Tristano's perfection and ubiquitous presence in the frequent doubling of characters, incidents, and motifs "based on the idea of opposition."[13] This principle is explored in another way in the most recent work done on the *Tavola*, that of Donald Hoffman.[14] His essays, concerned more with the personal than the social effects of love, nonetheless illustrate the uses of reduplication to show ideal love through contrast with the corruptible kind. All of the scholars have singled out the *Tavola* from both the French *Tristan en Prose* and other Italian versions of the Tristan story.

I have translated *La Tavola Ritonda* from Polidori's edition, putting the Italian version of the whole rise and fall of Arthur's kingdom into English for the first time. In spite of its title and its valid claims to originality, it is fundamentally a version of the *Tristan en Prose*, but it also includes fragments from the popular *Palamède* and redactions of a prose *Queste* and *Morte Dartu* which create a complete, if short, Arthurian cycle.

It is generally accepted that the Arthurian stories begin as written literature with Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1136[15] and that the love affair of Lancelot and Guenevere, first mentioned by Chrétien de Troyes in the late twelfth century,[16] is patterned on the one between Tristan and Iseult. The earliest written record of Tristan the lover is a mention in a poem by Bernart da Ventadorn, a Provençal troubadour of the mid-twelfth century.[17] All of the early literature, however, treats the Tristan stories as if they were long

established and very well known, suggesting a folk derivation which is also supported by mentions of Tristan and Arthur in Celtic sources. One interesting argument traces the tale of Tristan and Iseult (and of Lancelot and Guenevere by analogy) to a Pictish matrilineal and polyandrous setting, saying that an origin of this kind helps explain the curiously untarnished reputations of the adulterous queens.[18]

Historically, then, Tristan precedes Lancelot but, once the prose tradition begins, it is the other way around. By the early thirteenth century, long prose tales were being written reflecting a taste for repetition, reduplication, and sheer length, with Lancelot as protagonist. The French prose *Lancelot del Lac* of the Vulgate cycle achieves length in part by appropriating episodes from earlier Tristan poems. Like Tristan and Iseult, for example, Lancelot and Guenevere must avoid detection and capture by the king's envious nephew; and while he marries no second Guenevere, Lancelot is tricked into an unfaithfulness that results in long forest wandering.

The French prose *Tristan*, on the other hand, appears a decade or two after the *Lancelot*. Here to swell the story are not only many of the adventures of the poetic Tristan, but many of the prose Lancelot's as well. It is the author of the French *Tristan en Prose* who first thoroughly combines the Tristan and Iseult love story with Arthurian matter, expanding the hero's chivalric adventures in Logres and his encounters and friendships with the knights of Camelot. The prose version introduces a long family history and expands the story of Tristan's birth to include a rescue by Merlin, the first thread of interwoven Arthurian material. Here also first appears the episode of the French princess who kills herself, Dido-like, for love of Tristan, thus emphasizing his irresistibility even though he is only fifteen years old.

After his first visit to Ireland, where he has met and been impressed by the Princess Iseult, the prose hero becomes caught up in an adulterous affair with a woman in Cornwall, the beautiful wife of a knight. Such triviality in sexual matters would be unthinkable for the Tristan of the poetic tradition; but this episode serves, in the prose versions, to pit nephew against uncle as a rival in love and to blacken Mark's character. He too desires the woman, and out of jealousy disguises himself and attacks Tristan from ambush. Tristan's success in that fight and with the lady confirms his position as his uncle's adversary.

In fact, King Mark's entire character is altered in the prose tradition. He is shown to be a coward, a villain, and an enemy of chivalry; as Eugene Vinaver says, "It is Tristan's duty, not his misfortune, to act as his rival and keep him in check."[19] The heart's conflict that runs through the poems in which Tristan loves both Iseult and Mark and the king loves both his wife and his sister's son is thus removed from the stories, and personal conscience plays no part in the lovers' efforts to conceal their activity.

The love potion is underplayed in the prose versions,[20] where it is ob-

vious that Tristan and Iseult are strongly attracted to each other before they drink it. In Beroul's and Eilhart's poems the potion is so powerful that at first the lovers would die if they were kept apart for a week; in the earliest prose romances, as in Thomas, they are able, if reluctant, to live apart. This change is necessary, for the prose tradition requires that the hero be gone about the business of chivalry for long stretches of time. After his marriage to Iseult of the White Hands, the prose Tristan begins a series of adventures that have little to do with either of his women, adventures which take place in the enchanted forests of Logres and which culminate in his being made a knight of the Round Table. His death comes not in Brittany but in Cornwall, through the continued treachery of King Mark, who wounds him with a poisoned lance sent by Morgan le Fay: as an Arthurian sorcerer guarded the prose Tristan's infancy, so an Arthurian sorceress is the cause of his death.

A further addition to the *Tristan en Prose* is Palamides the Pagan, a knight who falls in love with Iseult even before Tristan does, and who must learn to live with unrequited passion. He and Tristan meet during the hero's first visit to Ireland, where they fight in a tournament for the right to be called her knight. At one point, Palamides abducts Iseult, and when Tristan rescues her the two knights swear eternal enmity; it is indicative of the prose tradition's system of values that when they next meet they become friends and companions in chivalry—to such an extent that Tristan finally persuades the pagan to be baptised.

Dinadan is also a character new to the traditional Tristan story. His very nature is indicative of the lateness of the *Tristan en Prose*, since he is there to satirize all of the conventional values of romance. He ridicules courtly love, saying that only a fool would suffer for it, and severely questions the chivalric code, especially the practice of fighting for no other reason than to prove one's valor. Tristan and the other knights errant take great pleasure in his satire, laughing at him and encouraging him to further vituperation, but they do not seem to agree with him; and indeed, Dinadan himself will fight, if he must, to defend the values of the court.[21]

Vinaver points out that compared to the prose *Lancelot* the *Tristan en Prose* shows a breakdown in *entrelacement*, the principle of unity which generally governs long romances. Far more than the earlier *Lancelot*, the *Tristan* abounds in loose ends: "quests are undertaken and abandoned, interpolations occur which have no bearing on any of the earlier or later episodes, and the work as a whole tends to become a vast *roman a tiroirs*."[22] Vinaver sees in this both a decline of the romance as an art form and in chivalry as an institution, but he goes on to say that, formless as it is, the prose Tristan superceded in popularity all other versions of the story to become the source of imitations in many languages. *La Tavola Ritonda* is an important one of these.

The *Tristan en Prose* and the *Palamède*[23] were soon followed by Rustichello

da Pisa's two vernacular romances, *Girone il Cortese* and *Il Gran Re Meliadus*;[24] characters from these two stories are used to begin the action of the *Tavola*. The earliest Tristan romance in Italian, the *Tristano Riccardiano*, provides some of the deviations from the French book repeated in the *Tavola*. Here for the first time Marco becomes Tristano's father's brother, not his mother's. A third brother, Perna, quarrels with Marco, who drowns him in a fountain: this is the Cornish king's first act of overt villainy. Tristano's stepmother makes two attempts to poison the little boy, as in the French version, but the order of events is reversed. First the king nearly drinks the poison intended for his son, which leads to the queen's being condemned and to Tristano's interceding for her; then, when she prepares a second poisoned cup her own son drinks his death from it.

Only in the two Italian versions does Amoroldo (the Morholt) wound Tristano treacherously; in the French story the wound, though poisoned, is the result of normal fighting. The way things happen before Tristano goes to Brittany is somewhat altered, and the knight who pursues the questing beast in Longres is Sir Prezzivale instead of Pellinoro or Palamidesso. At the end of the forest adventures in the wilderness of Andernantes the *Tristano Riccardiano* breaks off, but in his use of characters and episodes up to then, the anonymous author of the *Tavola* makes his indebtness plain.

Echoes of Dante are among the evidence suggesting that the prototype of surviving *Tavola* manuscripts took shape in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.[25] Also, in the tradition of medieval romance, several allusions are made to a particular source-book, "the fountain of all stories," once owned by the Count of Savoia and now belonging to "Messer Garo or Gaddo de' Lanfranchi of Pisa." There is nothing, however, to indicate whether this book is in French or Italian, or even whether it is real.

Even if it is a real book, the author of the *Tavola* does not speak of it as a prototype, but rather as a reference, an authority. It is remarkable that in giving shape to the *Tavola* he does for Italian literature what Malory does for English. He takes a decadent, diffuse form, reorganizes it to be even more inclusive, and creates a well-structured whole. The method is still digressive, and there are often occasions when Tristano's impulse to knight-errantry conflicts uncomfortably with his role as best lover in the world, but what both Malory and the author of the *Tavola* have done is frame the story of Tristan in stories about Camelot: Arthur's successes, Lancelot's love for Guenevere, the Grail Quest, and the last battles.

They have done this, however, to two very different ends.[26] Malory, even more than his French original, uses Tristan to echo and reinforce his central hero, Lancelot. Centered in the Arthurian matter, Tristan's story occupies about one third of the *Morte Darthur*, and is so clearly intended to reduplicate the life of Lancelot that it is reduced to secondary importance.[27] On the other hand, Tristano is the indisputable hero of the *Tavola*. He is

born on page forty-three of Polidori's edition, and is not fatally wounded until page 496. He dies on page 505, then the laments for his death and a description of the revenge taken against King Marco cover over half of the forty pages remaining. Accounts of Lancilotto precede and follow Tristano's story, and interactions between the two abound in the story itself; however, the initial accounts are reminiscent of the prophet-man god pattern. Lancilotto foreshadows Tristano's coming as John did the coming of Jesus, and the seriousness implied in such a comparison is fair. The treaty and loving compromise effected by Lancilotto between King Meliadus and King Artù smooth the way both for the ideal kingdom of Longres and the birth of the hero, since the rebel Meliadus pledges himself to Artù then marries a kinswoman of Lancilotto who becomes Tristano's mother. Many times after that Tristano is welcomed in Longres as if he were indeed the ideal representative and savior of chivalry. After Tristano's death, Artù's kingdom disintegrates; there is no holy spirit to bring purpose to the decimated knights, and the *Tavola* does not even end in Malory's hope, the inscription on Arthur's tomb:

HIC JACET ARTHURUS, REX QUONDAM REXQUE FUTURUS.

Like all of the prose narratives, *La Tavola Ritonda* subordinates courtly love to a more general view of chivalry. Although remnants of twelfth-century attitudes survive in, for example, Tristano's going mad when he thinks Isotta has been unfaithful to him, for the most part all relations with women are subsumed in the larger idea. Women are championed because they are weak, not usually because they are loved; if they are loved, this illustrates the nobility of the lover much more than the worth of the lady. Such a shift in values leads to some rather bizarre scenes in the *Tavola*. During the war between King Artù and King Meliadus, for instance, when it looks as though Artù's side is going to lose, the king's counselor advises him to send for Queen Ginevara and all her ladies to come and watch the battle from a grandstand, as if it were a tournament: "Because your knights are all in love, and when they see the ladies and their lovable faces, they will fight so valiantly that one man will be worth ten" (chapter 7).

Even more remarkable than this mob love psychology is an episode unique to the *Tavola* in which Tristano encounters a knight, Burletta della Diserta, who is searching angrily for Lancilotto. Burletta wants revenge because Lancilotto interrupted his rape of Fata Morgana's daughter and, though he describes his attack on the maiden with adjectives of love, he makes no pretense that she was willing, and lets Tristano know how she fought and cried. Tristano, eager as always to fight as a friend for Lancilotto's honor, is nonetheless amazed that the knight errant would have done such a thing: "It seems a great injury that he did you, but I marvel at it greatly, for it

is not like him to do such things" (chapter 81). The beloved ladies, then, have been reduced from superiors to a kind of tonic which, when taken, produces instant valor and chivalric worth.

Valor and chivalry, in the prose tradition, are important in their social contexts. The prose romances generally are more interested in the whole society than in their titular heroes: evidence of this are the many adventures of other knights interspersed among the activities of the main character. This is actually more true of the *Tristan en Prose* and Malory's *Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones* than it is of the *Tavola*, for reasons discussed below, but in each of the romances the great love between Tristan and Iseult is presented mainly through its social impact. Compared to the poetic tradition, little attention is paid to the psychology of the individual lovers.

Over and over again, the prose romances include episodes in which the strength and skill of a single knight decides the fate of an important segment of society. Although there is some gratuitous jousting on chance encounters in the forests, most of the fighting in *La Tavola Ritonda* and the other prose versions is done for a purpose. At the Castello del Proro on the Isola della Malvagia Usanza (chapters 35–39: Malory's Castle Plewre), though he is forced to follow the evil custom and behead both the knight he has overthrown and that knight's lady, Tristano does manage, through a truce with the high prince Galeotto, to bring this custom to an end. Earlier, Lancilotto had Christianized the Saracen stronghold he conquered by force of arms, changing its name from Dolorosa to Gioiosa Guardia (chapter 8). The combat most crucial to all of Arthurian society, and one peculiar to the *Tavola*, is that of Sir Tristano with Sir Lasancis (chapter 87). If Tristano had not overcome this knight and his enchanted weapons, all of the knights of the Tavola Ritonda and King Artù himself would have been burnt to death.

There are also some instances in which chivalry is composed as much of diplomacy as prowess: in Lancilotto's reconciliation of Galeotto and Meliadus with King Artù (chapter 9), and in Lancilotto's handling of King Marco and Tristano's of King Artù when the kings are driven by jealousy to war against their champions (chapters 49 and 50). Further, in the stories of the poetic tradition Tristan wins Iseult by killing a dragon; in the prose versions he fights for justice on behalf of her father, the king of Ireland, in a trial by combat. He not only wins the fight, but also wins the hearts of Arthur's knights by humbly asking for peace and by sparing his opponent.

The *Tavola* also shares with the whole prose tradition a structure which includes a number of lyrics and quite a few extraneous stories fit more or less logically into the main cycle. The lyrics in the *Tavola* are not translations from the French, but are apparently free inventions by the author,[28] while many of the tales are found nowhere else, or only in distant analogues. The first of these tales in the *Tavola* is the Ferragunze story (chapters 10 and 11); the only known counterpart to this is an English metrical romance

of the fifteenth century, *The Avowynge of Sir Bawdewyn*. Ferragunze is a small knight who makes four boasts about himself, boasts which King Artù and King Meliadus secretly agree to test. The small knight not only passes the tests, but gives elaborate and delightful reasons why.

Among the other stories peculiar to the *Tavola* are the dismaying of Dinadano (chapter 75), in which a maiden pretends to be in love with this knight who scorns love entirely, and the episodes of Burletta della Diserta and Sir Lasancis mentioned above. Just before the *Tavola*'s version of the Grail Quest begins there is a unique interlude in which the Dama del Lago captures all four of the lovers by magic and holds them for a while in a state of enforced bliss. Gardner feels that this is "probably from some lost narrative poem of the Breton lay or cantare type,"[29] but, more to the point, Joan Ferrante suggests that it is characteristic of the social emphasis of the *Tavola* that this "high point of love" is "shared by both couples."[30]

Most of the added episodes, however, seem primarily meant to glorify Tristano. These include his fights with Segurans the Brown of La Tavola Vecchia (chapter 105), with the giant who holds Sir Gabrionello in thrall (chapter 112), with Sir Fellone, "the felon knight" (chapters 113 and 114), and with Lancilotto, three times instead of the usual one, beside a "Merlino's Stone" (chapters 49, 113, and 126).

Glorifying Tristano is the main peculiarity of the *Tavola*. In the *Huth Merlin* of the Vulgate, when the knights are ranked, Tristan comes fifth, after Lancelot, Ector, Bors, and Gaheris, and before the Morholt (Amoroldo). In Malory, he is decidedly second to Lancelot, while in the *Tristan en Prose* the best he can do is to fight Lancelot and Palamides to a draw. In the *Tavola*, however, only the luck of sudden recognition or an actual intervention keeps Tristano from killing Lancilotto time after time. The Italian author uses all of the battles provided in the French prose version between the two "best knights in the world" and adds others, rewriting the former and slanting the latter so there is no doubt that Tristano is far superior to the French knight.

Not only is Tristano a better fighter than Lancilotto, he is a better lover and thus a morally better person. Lancilotto, Palamidesso, King Marco, and even King Artù himself display weaknesses that make Tristano look good by comparison. King Mark's character is blackened throughout the whole prose tradition, but only in the *Tavola*, for example, does Lancilotto attack Tristano when the latter, disguised as a monk, is escorting Isotta through Longres (chapter 89). The attack seems to be motivated in part by lust for the beautiful queen, and in part by pride: a sense of inappropriateness that a churchman should have such a prize under his protection. In all it is the sort of motivation and behavior one expects from Breus sanza Pietà.[31]

Isotta's beauty causes an even greater lapse in King Artù. Because of her reputation for loveliness, he decides to hold the great tournament at Verzeppe

to lure Tristano and the beautiful queen from Gioiosa Guardia, just so he can look at her. This tournament is a main feature of the prose tradition (in Malory it is called Lonzep), but the *Tavola*'s version is different from the others in a number of ways: first, the motive for calling it; then the role Tristano plays, winning it for both sides; and finally the devastating number of deaths caused by it, so many that King Artù resolves never again to allow swords to be used in a tourney. In addition, during the assembly, when Lancilotto and King Artù visit Tristano in secret to get him to change sides, the king is so taken with Isotta's beauty that he offers Tristano Queen Ginevara and the castle of Verzeppe to boot in exchange for her—and Lancilotto makes no objection (chapter 97). The mood, of course, is one of banter, but such Boccaccian sauciness would not be possible in a romance where love was as important as deeds of arms.

It is in deeds of arms that Palamides is Tristan's near equal in the *Tristan en Prose*. Not so in the *Tavola*. Because Palamidesso also loves Isotta, naturally the two knights challenge each other when they can, even after they have become companions at arms. There is an episode in most of the prose versions in which they agree to meet and fight on a certain day at Merlin's Stone. Palamides fails to come, but what has happened in the French versions is that he is being held in prison. In the *Tavola*, however, the author makes it plain that the pagan knight was afraid, that he never meant to keep his word, and that he never became the great knight he might have been because he could not grow in Tristano's shadow (chapter 113).

Thus the Italian Tristano is made more heroic than the French Tristan by the addition of episodes in which he can shine, and by the degrading of those he associates with. His importance is also underscored by his ubiquitous presence in the *Tavola*. Once he is born there is scarcely a page on which he does not appear, so that the principle of unity in the Italian book is not the *entrelacement* one expects of the French romances, but rather the sort of biographical coherence seen in actual history or in a picaresque tale. When the source provides a story focused on another knight, such as Palamidesso's excursion on behalf of the king in the ship (chapter 94), the author of the *Tavola* shortens it considerably and hurries back to his main object of interest as quickly as he can.

When the time comes to tell the story of the *Queste*, the author of the *Tavola* also shortens that, though he does include the testing of Prezzivale and Bordo separately from Tristano's adventures (chapters 117–121). Still, a good deal of the quest section is devoted first to the exploits of Tristano and Lancilotto, then to those of Tristano alone, with such heroic additions as the fight against the felon knight. Most of those adventures are no different in kind from the many in more secular parts of the book, except now the knights make sure to baptize anyone who needs it; in the fight with Sir Fellone, however, Tristano wins by promising God never again to sin with

Isotta, then invoking Cristo's name as he battles this foe who magically has five times his strength.[32]

The author of the *Tavola* is primarily secular in his sympathies. When Galasso has to be named the best knight in the world, and when he has to win tournaments as well as the grail, the author records these things grudgingly, and is quick to say it is a special case: "So before his shield had received one blow he was called the best knight in the world, because of the grace and the works of God. But Tristano was the noblest worldly knight ever born on this earth, the gentlest and the most courteous" (chapter 109). Tristano acknowledges his own worldliness when, very soon after his miraculous defeat of Sir Fellone, he gives up the quest and returns to Cornovaglia, Isotta, and his death. The Italian author gives him a Christian deathbed, but the real focus of the hero's attention is on chivalry: he sends his arms to Camellotto, dispatching them with care to King Artù before turning his attention to Isotta. After their simultaneous deaths, much of the narrative is concerned with the revenge against King Marco, whose strange death by forced gluttony is peculiar to the *Tavola*. Then, even though the foreword states that "the destruction of the Tavola . . . came about through the undertaking of the high quest of the Sangradale," it would seem that Tristano's death is the real cause. Camellotto degenerates in luxury, the spirit gone out of it; with no Tristano to mediate between Artù and Lancilotto, the end is inevitable, and comes quickly.

A Note on the Translation

I have been generally faithful to Polidori's text, translating word for word when it seemed natural, but often rearranging syntax for better English. I have, however, downplayed the lavish reduplication of adjectives and descriptive nouns, leaving enough, I hope, to retain the formulaic flavor. The fact that it is difficult to tell one battle from another also reflects the oral ancestry of the written *Tavola*; I resisted the temptation to compare a knight fighting to anything but a "lion among beasts."

I use Italian personal and place names, choosing one when the text provides variant spellings: thus I write "Lancilotto" and not "Lancialotto," and Artù" rather than "Artus." I have translated descriptive names, such as "Isotta the Blonde" and "Urgano the Hairy," except for "Breus sanza Pietà," who always appears in Malory as "Bruce sans Pité."

Reading prefaces, I used to wonder how authors and editors could have so many people to thank. Now I know. My earliest appreciation must go to Mary de Rachwiltz, Peter Way, and William McNaughton, with whom I first began this work in the summer of 1976. I owe inspiration to the ideas of Ezra Pound and Robert Bly, who have a lot to say about translation.

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Notes

1. E. G. Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature* (London, 1930), pp. 152–53.
2. Larry D. Benson, *Malory's Morte Darthur* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1976), p. 4.
3. F. L. Polidori, ed., *La Tavola Ritonda*, 2 vols. (Bologna, 1864–65). The second volume contains a lexicographical examination of the text, an appendix of some as yet unedited Tristan texts, and an index of names of persons and places.
4. Daniela Branca, *I Romanzi Italiani di Tristano e la Tavola Ritonda* (Florence, 1968), p. 30.
5. Mario Eusebi, "Reliquie del *Tristano* di Thomas nella *Tavola Ritonda*," *Cultura Neolatina* 39 (1979), describes a manuscript ignored by Polidori, probably because of its fragmentary nature, but which represents a stem of the prototype different from any of the codices he did use, and closer to Thomas.
6. Polidori, pp. liv–lv. This attitude reflects the medieval opinion as well.
7. Branca, pp. 29–32.
8. Some characteristic histories include Francesco De Sanctis, *History of Italian Literature*, vol. I, trans. by Joan Redfern (New York, 1931); Arthur Symonds, *Italian Literature*, vol.I (1881); W. T. H. Jackson, *Medieval Literature: A History and a Guide* (New York and London, 1966).
9. Branca, pp. 49–61.
10. Gardner, pp. 159, 167, 169, 170, 171, 181, 183.
11. Christopher Kleinhenz, "Tristan in Italy: The Death or Rebirth of a Legend," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 5 (1975), p. 147.
12. Joan Ferrante, *The Conflict of Love and Honor* (The Hague, 1973), p. 121.
13. Ferrante, p. 120.
14. Donald Hoffman, "Dionysos in Cornwall," read before the Arthurian Congress in Regensburg, West Germany, August, 1979 and "The Guarone Variations," read at the Modern Language Association Annual Meeting in New York, December, 1981.

15. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain.* Available in a translation by Sebastian Evans (E. P. Dutton: New York, 1958).

16. Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot, or The Knight of the Cart.* Available in a translation by W. W. Comfort, *Arthurian Romances* (E. P. Dutton: New York, 1955).

17. Bernart da Ventadorn, "Canso," in *Anthology of the Provençal Troubadours,* 2nd ed., T. G. Bergin, ed. (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1973), p. 42.

18. J. H. Fisher, "Tristan and Courtly Adultery," *Comparative Literature* 9 (1957), pp. 156–58.

19. Eugene Vinaver, "The Prose *Tristan,*" in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History,* R. S. Loomis, ed. (Oxford, 1959), p. 340.

20. Vinaver, p. 340. See also Renée Curtis, *Tristan Studies* (Munich, 1969), p. 15.

21. Kleinhenz, pp. 264–68.

22. Vinaver, pp. 345–46.

23. The important work on the manuscripts of these romances has been done by Eilart Löseth. They are: *Le roman en prose de Tristan, le roman de Palamède, et la compilation de Rusticien de Pise, analyse critique d'après les manuscrits de Paris* (Paris, 1980); *Le Tristan et le Palamède des manuscrits francais du British Museum* (Kristiana, 1905); and *Le Tristan et le Palamède des manuscrits de Rome et de Florence* (Kristiana, 1924).

24. Gardner, pp. 47–48.

25. Gardner, p. 153.

26. Branca, p. 66.

27. Thomas C. Rumble, " 'The Tale of Tristan': Development by 'Analogy'," in *Malory's Originality,* R. M. Lumiansky, ed. (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1964), pp. 145–47.

28. Branca, pp. 154–66.

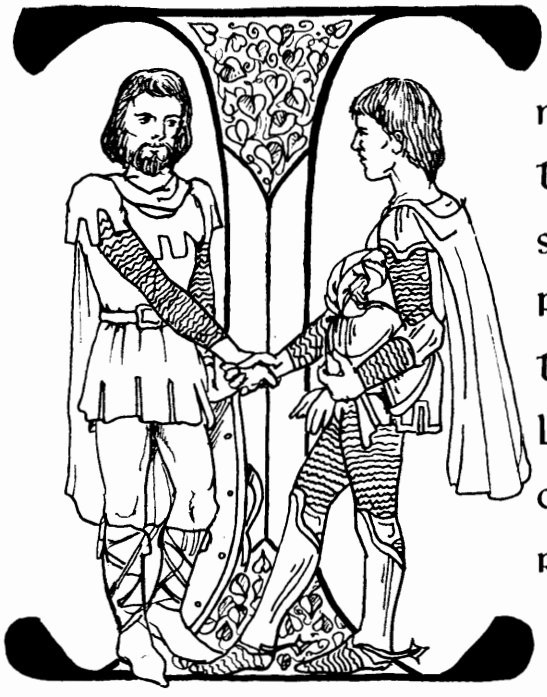
29. Gardner, p. 175.

30. Ferrante, p. 146.

31. Breus sanza Pietà is the antithesis of all that is courtly in a knight: he rapes women, fights treacherously, and bullies the weak. He is the sworn enemy of all the knights of the Tavola Ritonda.

32. Ferrante, p. 102. She points out that Tristano "receives five horses, accepts or rejects the love of five women, and has five encounters with Lancilotto. Five is the symbolic number of the world and the flesh. . . ." Thus in conquering the five strengths of Sir Fellone, Tristano would seem to be overcoming worldly desires. Thus it is significant that he lets the enchanter live, since he himself will soon return to Isotta, abandoning the quest for the grail.

Tristan and the Round Table



In God's name, amen. This is the Book of the stories of the Tavola Ritonda, and of Sir Tristano, Sir Lancilotto, and many other knights, as recounted below.

y lords, this book tells and devises the fine adventures, the great deeds of chivalry, and the noble tournaments done in the time of King Uter Pandragon and the barons of the Tavola Vecchia, three hundred years and more after the death of our lord Iesu Cristo, son of the true and living God. Also it tells of the other deeds of chivalry done in the time of King Artù and the brave knights of the Tavola Nuova, especially by Sir Tristano, Sir Lancilotto, Sir Galasso, and Sir Palamidesso, and generally by all the other knights errant of the Tavola, and by foreign knights and those from far countries who at that time were proving themselves in deeds of arms. And also we will show the destruction of the Tavola, which came about through the undertaking of the high quest of the Sangradale. Therefore let each of you take care to be kind and courteous in listening to it, so that you may each be pleased with the story and the author may receive joy and delight.

I.

n this part the story tells that King Uter Pandragon held a noble court and kept a great barony in the kingdom of Longres, at the grand castle of Urbano. It was once at the approach of the gentle season and the lovely month of May that he called together all the knights, kings, counts, and barons, bidding them come with their wives and their ladies to the great plain at Urbano to hold a tournament, as they used to do in days of old. And he decreed that whatever knight brought a lady with him, if she were captured by another knight, must fight bravely enough to keep her or be taken and put in a cart and pulled all around the field so that mud and filth would be thrown on his back, and he would be greatly dishonored.[1]

As the month approached, all the kings, counts, knights, and barons brought their wives and ladies to the place appointed for the tournament. Meanwhile, Sir Gurone the Courteous, a knight from a faraway land, was resting at one of his retreats, that is, the castle of the Busco Verdulante. Hearing about this tournament, he armed himself, mounted his horse, and went toward the assembly all alone. As he rode along, he met two knights escorting a beautiful lady, richly adorned. Sir Gurone greeted them both, saying, "Which of you escorts this lady?"

"Sire," said one of the knights, "why do you ask?"

"I ask," said Gurone, "because I wish to win her by force of arms."

"So, you want to fight with us?" said the other knight.

"Yes, I do," said Gurone, "if you intend to contest her. Now, let's get to the proof."

Then with no further challenge, one moved away from the other. As they spurred their horses forward, Gurone lowered his lance and struck the knight such a blow that he sent him dead to the ground from his horse. When the lady saw that her knight was dead, she began to weep and cry, but Gurone approached her, saying, "You have lost one knight, but by fortune you have gained another who is equally good."

The lady took no comfort from his words; instead she sought protection from the other knight. That one attacked Gurone, but hit him on his

shield in a way that did no harm. Then Gurone struck him and sent him to the ground badly wounded. Coming to the lady he took her horse by the bridle and put her thus to ride before him, but before she left she spoke with the defeated knight. In that conversation she ordered a great treachery against Sir Gurone, through which he would be much dishonored. Meanwhile Gurone led the lady away, and she pretended to love him, but in her heart she hated him bitterly.

When Gurone and the lady came to the tourney field they found many noble people assembled there, and Gurone lodged in the pavilion of Androes, King of Scozia. Soon over the field went a decree that all the knights should assemble, and that they should bring no weapon of offense except their lances. Then King Uter had all the ladies seated on a high wooden stand covered with cloths of fine silk.

The people were assembled when onto the field came two armed knights flying banners all of blue with a silver stripe. One of them was King Bordo of Gaules and the other was King Bando of Benoich, his brother. Riding to the middle of the plain, lances high, they cried out a challenge to any knight who wanted a separate joust. Then out of a pavilion rode two cavaliers: one was Amorotto of Gaules, and the other was called Sir Iaco. Sir Iaco came out from one side, and King Bando struck him so hard he sent him to earth from his horse, but Amorotto overthrew King Bordo and his horse as well. Know that then there was a multitude of knights jousting on the field.

Then King Meliadus rode onto the meadow, fierce as a dragon, flying a banner of azure with a golden lion in its center. He called out, "Whoever wants a joust with King Meliadus of Liones may have it!"

The first to respond was a worthy knight who rode to the encounter beneath a black banner; this was King Scalabrone who bore great hatred against King Meliadus only for envy of his chivalrous deeds. King Uter had everyone draw aside to watch the joust between the two noble knights. Then with no hesitation the two valiant barons rode to the far ends of the field so they were separated by more than a good three leagues; they struck their mounts with two fine golden spurs so that the horses, feeling the shock of it, ran willingly. The knights were eager, too, for each of them would have given a city to be the winner of that encounter. Both of them were considered the best knights in the world, and all the other jousts were held back for theirs. Their horses were stout chargers, and the knights were vigorous and strong; they came on in such a great storm that truly they seemed like lightning. The grass turned brown under the horses' forefeet and their back feet splintered the stones, making such a cloud of dust that it swallowed the sky like the mouth of a dragon, and the knights,fierce as lions, gripped their lances.

Then lowering their lances, they struck each other so hard that their weapons shattered. Knight and horse, they struck each other on their shields and breastplates so hard that both men went to earth with their horses.

Their fall was so heavy that neither pulse nor vein could be found or felt; they lay like dead men and were carried in arms to their pavilions.

The fourth joust was between Sir Estorri of Sobolis and Sir Cherin of Linello, and Sir Cherin was the victor; the fifth was between Sir Androes, King of Scozia, and King Ferramonte of Norgales, and King Ferramonte was the vanquished. In the sixth joust the King of Rilanfer in Irlanda defeated King Peles Peschaor. In the seventh, King Peries of Organia unhorsed King Bando of Benoich; in the eighth, Brunoro the Brown sent the King of Norgales dead to earth; in the ninth, Hettor the Brown overcame King Lotto. In the tenth joust, Februe the Brown unseated King Uter Pandragon and sent his horse down as well. These ten jousts were held separately, but all of the other knights jousted together on the field and many of them were killed or wounded, jousting until their lances were broken. Then a proclamation was cried throughout the field that all should go to rest in their own pavilions.

Having disarmed themselves, they went to eat with King Uter, where those who had won were asked to sit at the royal table. Sir Gurone the Courteous was among those who sat there, for he had proven himself very well to all the company. The lady he had won on the road sat in front of them with the other noblewomen. While the barons all were eating, the knight whose companion Gurone had killed came into the hall and, approaching Uter Pandragon, said, "My lord, it seems to me a great marvel that a knight eats at your table who by his cowardice lost his lady on the road. According to your decree he ought to be taken and bound in a cart."

The king asked this knight, "What man do you mean?"

And the knight, who was called Gariosso of the county of Maganza, lord of the city of Pontiere, said to the king, "There he is. He is called Gurone. I took his lady from him, and you can see the very one sitting there in front of you."

Gurone, hearing him lie so shamelessly, felt such anger swelling his heart that he could make no answer. The king asked Gurone, "Is what this knight accuses you of truly what happened?"

Gurone answered, "Upon my honor, I never did so foul a thing. Ask the lady who is with me; she will tell you the truth."

Gurone said this because he thought the lady loved him loyally and had not ordered any treachery against him. Then King Uter summoned the lady and commanded that she describe the matter as it had occured. She said to him, "My lord king, know truly that I was at first the lady of Sir Gurone, who was bringing me to see this assembly. On the road we met that knight who, for desire of capturing me, challenged Sir Gurone to battle, and so they jousted together. He bested Gurone with lance and with sword, so Gurone lost me and this knight captured me and kept me with him all that day. At night, I escaped from him and came back to Sir Gurone, because

I love him very much and I have loved him for a long, long time."

Hearing her speak such great treachery, Gurone could not think how to deny or excuse what she had accused him of; thus the king had him taken and bound in a cart and had him led all around the field, so that mud and filth were hurled on top of him. Dismounting from the cart in great shame, Gurone departed and returned to his own country, where he became very cruel toward the knights of the Tavola Vecchia.

II.

Now the tale tells that the next day dawned beautiful and bright, and the proclamation went out that the knights and barons should return to the broad plain that was the jousting field. The ladies again mounted the high stand to see the tournament begun among the combattants. And having held back a little, here through the field rode an armed knight accompanied by four ladies, very beautiful and richly attired. Before the royal pavilion this knight announced that whoever wanted to joust with him should come forward, and whoever could best him might win the one of these four maidens who pleased him most. At that point, when the announcement was heard, without more delay the tall Meliadus of Liones came against him. Then they began to exchange blows, and the knight, who carried a shield of gold, struck Meliadus with such power that he knocked him to earth and his horse as well. Then he beat King Lotto, King Bordo, and King Iscambrinello, and he bested King Bando and Sir Febus, and as a last blow he knocked down King Uter Pandragon and his horse. After that, he rode through the crowd of knights subduing them all, and he did such deeds of arms it was a wonder to watch him, and thus he had the prize and honor of the tournament. This man was Sir Sigurans the Brown whose deeds are recorded in the tales of Sir Ganoro the Great.

When the next day came, each king, baron, and knight left to return to his own country. Now the tale leaves this history of Uter Pandragon and the mighty barons of the Tavola Vecchia and we will tell of the Tavola Nuova of King Artù. Especially will we tell of the birth, life, and death of two noble knights, that is, Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto, and of other foreign knights errant.

For the present, we will speak of Sir Tristano, because he was the source and foundation of all chivalry. And so that we may tell his story better,

we will tell of him and of the seven principal matters into which his whole history is divided. First we will speak of his most noble lineage, and then of his very noble birth, and then of his perfect love, and then of his cruel death. Then of the great lament that was made for this bitterest death, and of the very great vengeance that was taken on his behalf. Now, therefore, we will speak of his lineage, how he descended and from which nation; and therefore I beg that each of you be at peace, and be kind in the listening.

III.

The tellers of tales order and imagine that the first king of Cornovaglia descended from Salamone the high king, from his lineage of Bramanzia. He was called Codo, and had a son named Anzilere and also a daughter called Trasfilas. There came a time when Anzilere killed, by treachery and without any reason, the good King Appollo, first king of Liones, who was descended from the noble King Alesandro. King Codo was so grieved by the death of King Appollo that to preserve justice and reason he had his son Anzilere taken and had his head cut off, for paternal love could not in any way force him to falsify justice. In this he followed the counsel of Salamone, which is, "Uphold justice, ye who judge the land."[2]

According to what one reads, King Appollo left one son of about eight years who was called by name Gandaries. King Codo had the child brought to him, and had him cared for with great love; when the boy reached fifteen he thus made him a knight. And, to secure the peace, Codo gave him his daughter in marriage, and after his own death left him the kingdom of Cornovaglia. Gandaries and Trasfilas lived together many years and had twelve sons. The firstborn, who succeeded to the inheritance, was named Zersides. When Gandaries passed from this life, his twelve sons were in accord and they made their oldest brother king of Cornovaglia, and Baralis, their next brother, they made king of Liones. Then the ten who remained went adventuring in foreign lands, seeking to win honor as worthy and loyal knights.

Know then that Gandaries had never taken the crown itself. He could not wear it for this reason: at that time it was the custom that if a son did not take revenge for the death of his father, he could not wear his father's crown because he was not worthy of so much honor. He presided over his kingdom as lord only, and not as king.

Afterwards then Zersides was king in Cornovaglia and Baralis king in

Liones, but Zersides died a short time later and his kingdom reverted to Baralis, his brother. Baralis had two sons, one named Feriando and the other called Felissi, but since Feriando died as a youth, after the death of his father Felissi was crowned for both kingdoms. Thus he lived until he was attacked by King Dilianfer of Irlanda. There were mighty wars then between them, lasting a long time, with great battles on land and on sea, but in the end King Dilianfer invaded the kingdom of Cornovaglia with a vast army of knights and foot soldiers, and besieged the city of Tintoile.

He stayed so long with his host that he took the castle, conquering it for a tributary, setting a certain sum which had to be paid every year. And there were some who said that because of this King Felissi grew sick and died, because of his great grief. He left two sons after him; the firstborn called Meliadus, and the second Marco, because this child was born on the first Mars' day (Tuesday) in March. There was also a third son, whose name was Perna.

Marco was crowned king of Cornovaglia, and the people of that country were rather happy about having him for their lord for he was very handsome and courtly; but he was not very wise, because he was too easily persuaded to doubt and to believe. Meliadus was crowned king of Liones, and those of his land were also pleased because they saw that he was happy, wise, and courteous as well. After Marco was crowned for the kingdom of Cornovaglia, King Amoroldo of Irlanda, the son of King Dilianfer, did not wait long before he came down on him. He brought with him a great gathering of barons and knights and demanded of King Marco the tribute which he owed from the nine years past. Amoroldo told him if he did not pay the tribute within thirty days, he would owe ten times as much.

IV.

If anyone might ask how much the tribute was which Amoroldo demanded from King Marco, I would say that in the time of King Dilianfer, who conquered that realm by force of arms, this is the tribute and the tax which he imposed: King Felissi had to pay to him each year three measures of gold, ten marriageable maidens, ten young men to make knights, ten falcons, ten goshawks, ten hawks, ten dogs, and ten greyhounds; also three camels, three lions, three leopards, and three bucks.[3] This was the same tribute Amoroldo demanded from King Marco. And when he had thus demanded it, Perna

spoke out against it, saying to King Marco his brother, "I protest that the tribute should not be paid, but should be defended in battle, so that you will not have to pay more, and we will not have to live as vassals of another."

But the king said, "Perna, words are cheap and combat is dear, for I have no knight courageous enough to take arms against Amoroldo. You know he is praised as the worthiest knight in the world."

Then Perna replied to King Marco, "If you don't want to enter the lists against him to get this country out of bondage, then take off your crown. It may happen then that some good warrior will come to claim it, who through his prowess will get this country out of slavery."

You should know that Perna said these words to King Marco on his own behalf, for he had no part of his father's kingdoms, and would gladly have risked his life to become lord. Hearing such talk, King Marco became very angry against his brother, saying to him, "Not for this will I give up my crown for anyone living; instead I will keep it in spite of what anyone wants." Then he ordered the tribute to be paid. This was done immediately, and Amoroldo went back to his own country.

You should know that of the three sons of King Felissi, King Meliadus was the most noble, the worthiest, and the wisest; King Marco was the handsomest, but the least wise and the most despicable, while Perna was the ugliest and the smallest. For many days King Marco remained angry with Perna, until one day they went hunting in the desert of Liantes with many other barons. They came to the Fontana del Lione, and Perna dismounted to get a drink. He leaned over the fountain, and King Marco came quietly up behind him, hit him on the head with a sword, and killed him. He did this only because Perna had spoken against the tribute and said he should not pay it. This proves the words of the wise man, who says, "The man who sees, hears, and keeps silent wishes to live in peace. The one who talks too much often errs; the one who speaks little gains approval. To know how to hold one's tongue is the first and last virtue. Because the tongue is nobler than any other part of the body, one wants to unleash it most wisely. A man should think about a word before he says it, for once spoken, it cannot be taken back, because it cuts more sharply than a knife. The man who talks too much does not live long on the earth: do not talk too much if you have no wish to err."

And now the story stops speaking of King Marco and we will tell of the noble King Meliadus, from whom descended the courageous and courteous Sir Tristano.

V.

All of the stories say and for this purpose agree that King Meliadus was truly a worthy and loyal knight. Never had he had a lady, nor ever thought of having one; he did this to please God and to better conserve his strength. But according to what the story contains, King Artù was the lord of Gran Brettagna, chief and protector of the knights errant. He frequently made war and held siege against the city of Liones because he wanted Meliadus to do him homage, and pay census and tribute to him as all the kings except Meliadus and the high prince Galeotto did. Galeotto was then the lord of distant lands and islands who, because of his bravery, ruled over eighteen kingdoms.

At that time King Artù held great power, because he had as his ally King Bando of Benoich and all his kin. Thus, when King Bando died, King Artù was no longer so eager to wage war on King Meliadus' lands, at least until the one son left by King Bando had become a knight. Then, to secure his power, King Artù began again to war against King Meliadus.

And therefore we will tell of the death of King Bando and the birth of his son, and then of the birth and life of Sir Tristano, son of the high king Meliadus, King of Liones and source of courtesy and knighthood.

VI.

The true history tells that King Bando was at the court of King Artù, enjoying himself on his return from the siege of the city of Liones, when a messenger came to tell him that the kings Arandus and Brandino, with their kinsmen, were holding the city of Benoich in siege, and that many of the barons and castles had risen in rebellion against him. Then King Bando in great sorrow and without any delay took horse and, accompanied by his lady and thirty knights, rode back to his own land. Riding thus, having arrived at the crest of the mountain and begun to descend toward the plain, he saw Benoich, his city, all ablaze.

Seeing himself in such height, then because of this brought so low, he felt himself swell with great pride as well as melancholy and grief. The blood was constrained in his heart, so that the heat of pride and the cold of grief and melancholy consumed his natural heat, and his heart struggled until

his strength failed and he fell senseless from his horse, dying almost at once.

Queen Gostanza was then seven months heavy with child, and when she saw that her husband and lord had passed from this life, at that very hour, because of the great pain her body had received, she was delivered of a beautiful little boy. After he was born, she lived three days and then died.

The Dama del Lago, sister of Fata Morgana, having discovered through her magic arts that King Bando had left a son who would become a brave knight, was very glad of it, for she had always felt great love for his father, King Bando. She arranged it so the little boy came into her care, and she had him baptized and gave him the name of Lancilotto, which means, "very wise and skilled knight of the lance and sword." She had him nursed well and faithfully, and devised it so no one might know she had him in her care except the wet nurse. King Artù and the King of Gaules, and all the others of his kin cared little if the boy lived or died, for he was the heir to the kingdom.

When the boy, that is Lancilotto, reached the age of fifteen, the Dama del Lago summoned four of her ladies to her side and instructed them to lead Lancilotto to the court of King Artù, and to ask the king on her behalf to make the boy a knight, knowing that by him all chivalry would be defended. Then the four ladies mounted and went on their way with the boy.

When they were inside the kingdom of Longres near the city of Camellotto, they met three knights fully armed. One was Sir Calvano, another was Sir Chieso the Seneschal, and the third was called Sir Arecco. The weather was beautiful that day, and the sun was striking the armor of the three knights making them all shining and resplendant. It was such a beautiful thing to see, especially for one who had never seen arms or knights before. Lancilotto looked at them and hurled himself to the ground from his horse and fell to his knees, where he began to say his prayers before the three knights.

The knights spoke courteously to the four ladies, asking them who they were and why the young man had knelt thus. They responded happily to this greeting and said that they were from a far country, but as for why the young man knelt, they did not know. Then Sir Calvano came toward him, saying, "Young man, for what cause have you knelt there?"

He answered, "If I have knelt, it is no wonder, for my lady and these ladies too have often told me that our lord God is the most beautiful thing in the world, and truly I believe that you are he, for you are the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in this world."

Then the knights and ladies, having heard the boy, began to laugh out loud, saying, "Young man, we are neither God nor angels, but knights who go into distant lands, proving our prowess so that no wrong will be done to anyone."

"By my faith," said Lancilotto, "since knights are so beautiful to see, I would willingly be one if I could."

Then the boy asked the three knights if they would show him the uses of their arms, and Sir Calvano told him how the helmet, shield, and breastplate were for defense, the lance and the sword for offense. "But these ladies say they are taking you to the court of King Artù; he will give you arms and a horse, and will make you a knight." With such words they made the boy very happy.

And so they took leave of each other, and Lancilotto and the ladies rode so that they came to the city of Camellotto, where King Artù was keeping his court. Entering the palace, they went to the great hall in which they found the king with Queen Ginevara and many knights and barons. The ladies greeted the king on behalf of the Dama del Lago, telling him how she ordered it, begging that the boy be made a knight. The king replied that he would do it gladly.

In a little while, the tables were laid, and all the people were seated to eat. Lancilotto was seated at the table of the knights of least proved merit. While they were thus eating, a maiden of the court arrived who had never spoken anything, and who was known as "the lady who tells no lies," because having never spoken at all, she had never uttered truth or falsehood. She took Lancilotto by the hand and then she spoke: "Stand up, young man. You are Bando of Benoich's son, and you have come to sit at the table of the knights errant." And never again in this world did the maiden speak.[4]

When the king knew that this boy the Dama del Lago had cared for was King Bando's son, he was very happy. He did the youth much honor, and made ready to make him a knight. All that night, just as it was the custom to do, Lancilotto kept vigil in the great church, and in the morning the king dubbed him a knight. He did not then gird him with a sword, for no one was ever thus girded until the age of twenty-five, but he vested him with arms, a horse, and the insignia his father King Bando had carried, the bright blue field with its silver band.

Queen Ginevara, seeing the new knight so handsome, immediately fell in love with him, and he fell in love with her. Each one desired the other for love, and gladly they served each other, and gladly would have wished to meet together, but they were afraid that they might be noticed. So they resisted, but both remained with their desire and still loved each other with good heart, and each of them was given totally to love and secretly they served each other in whatever way they could, but not so much that their love yet had fruit.

VII.

The story tells that as King Artù and his barons were still at court there appeared a knight armed fully, who had been wounded in the chest by a lance in such a way that one could see a good part of the tip coming out his back. Into the great hall before the king this knight came shouting and saying, "No knight may be so bold as to put his hand into my wound unless he will first swear to avenge my dishonor!"

But when the people asked him to name the knight who had wounded him, he said that the pain of his wound had made him lose his memory: "I don't know who I am myself; in no way can I tell who has wounded me."

Then Lancilotto stepped forward and pulled out the lance, but as soon as he did, the knight fell dead on the ground. The king said to Lancilotto, "Knight, why have you done this, when you do not know against whom to avenge him?"

Lancilotto replied, "I will start out seeking adventure, and with as many knights as I fight, so many will I kill, so that among them will be the knight who killed this man."

Then the king said to him, smiling, "You have more courage than anyone here."

But, according to what our book says, the dead knight was called Federion the Red, son of the lady Tessina who, some time later, Tristano would deliver from the hands of the lady Losanna of the Torre Antica in the mountains of Zetro.[5] And the one who had wounded him was called Trincardo, brother of this Lady Losanna.

And so, having taken on the duty of vengeance for that knight, Lancilottto equipped himself with fine armor and a strong, swift horse, then took leave of King Artù and Queen Ginevara. She was very sad at his going, and spoke to him then a little in secret. She kissed him and embraced him as tightly as she could, then struck him lightly on his cheek, saying, "Knight, remember me always, and whoever recommends himself to you for love of me, do him no villainy."

Then he embraced her, and they made each other a pledge that they could not cash just then; he left her and began his journey through distant lands.

As the new knight went adventuring, he came to the lady of Mimalto who kept him in prison for a long time, only in order to have his love.[6] After he was delivered out of that place he left her behind and rode until he came to the castle of Sir Lombardo, who called himself the mortal enemy of all the knights errant and knights of the Tavola Ritonda. When he came before the gate, Lancilotto found two pavilions raised. The count of Lombardo and his knights and barons were under one of them, and under the

other were tied some good war horses and some poles hung with great racks of armor. Under a pine tree nearby sat a marvellously beautiful lady.

As Lancilotto rode between the two pavilions, the count said to him, "Sir Knight, you cannot pass this way unless you consent to a joust. If you beat me, you will have won the lady beneath the pine and you may do whatever you like with me; but if I win, then you will be my prisoner forever. And if your horse or your armor has any blemish, take one of those under the pavilion there—they are all quite excellent."

Lancilotto, hearing such a challenge, gladly agreed to the joust, but not for anything would he change his horse or armor. Then Sir Lombardo mounted, and being on the field, each one challenged the other. They lowered their lances and gave each other two such immensely powerful blows that each one was bent over his saddlebow; but Lancilotto kept a stong grip on his lance, and through great force, he sent the count a shaft's length to earth. Then he put his hand to the hilt of his sword, saying, "Either promise me to go as a prisoner to Queen Ginevara or I will cut off your head." Sir Lombardo delayed not a moment but mounted his horse and rode so that he soon came to Camellotto and presented himself as a prisoner of Queen Ginevara on behalf of the new knight. Lancilotto, staying behind, cared nothing for the lady under the pine tree, so much he delighted in Queen Ginevara.

Then he left and rode on his way so that he found himelf at a high, narrow pass which was guarded by two strong giants. It was King Gradosso of Sansogna who had it guarded in this way, because he lived in fear of the Count of Lombardo. But Lancilotto fought both of the giants: one he killed and the other sent as prisoner to Queen Ginevara. And she, seeing herself presented with so many prisoners on behalf of the new knight, was all consumed because of her love; night and day she thought only of how she might find him and see him again.

In order to see him, she devised a great subtlety. One night as she lay embracing King Artù she said, "Sire, if you will remember well, it has been nearly fifteen years since you have waged war on King Meliadus' lands. All the people are talking about that, and they say you hold back out of fear, because since King Bando died, you have never been bold enough to go into Meliadus' country. Surely you should not hold back out of fear, for even if King Bando is dead you have his son to aid you, who is alive enough and bold as well. He is in the district, and when he hears you are at war he will quickly give you help. Therefore I counsel you that you demonstrate your great power against King Meliadus."

Hearing these words, the king said that he would do it gladly, and that he would never cease warring on that realm if first King Meliadus did not swear allegiance to him and promise to pay him tribute. When morning came, the king sent letters and messages throughout his land to kings, dukes, mar-

quises, barons, vavasors, and princes, to captains and all other men on foot and on horseback, from twenty years old all the way to one hundred, saying that in three months they must be in Camellotto with their arms and their horses and all other war tools, well supplied with biscuits and other provisions to last one year.

After the heralds had gone out and delivered their messages, at the determined time all the people gathered in the city of Camellotto. Then King Artù had the trumpets sounded and all the great bells rung with hammers; his banners were unfurled, and all rode out of the city riding one day after the other, until they found themselves two leagues outside of the city of Liones, and there they camped on the bank of a great river.

When King Meliadus saw that King Artù had again besieged his city he was very sorry and grieved, and quickly sent letters and messages telling all his allies about his predicament. Then quickly they gathered in response to those letters, the high prince Galeotto, the Duke of Bramante, Amoroldo of Irlanda, King Marco of Cornovaglia, the King of Scozia, the King of a Hundred Knights, and many other barons. When all of the warriors had gathered at the city of Liones, King Meliadus rode out and waited on his side of the river. King Artù, seeing such a mighty cavalry with Meliadus, began to feel somewhat doubtful, but Sir Viano, his counselor, comforted him very much by saying, "Sire, have no fear. If you follow my advice, you will be the conquerer. For now I thus advise you that you have Queen Ginevara come to the field, and all the other ladies and maidens with bright faces from the city of Camellotto, and have them sit high on the river bank on a wooden platform. Because your knights are all in love, when they see the ladies and their lovable faces, they will fight so valiantly that one man will be worth ten. Thus you will be the victor."

King Artù received this advice gladly, and called Queen Ginevara to come to the battlefield with all her bright-eyed ladies and maidens, 1280 of them, indeed the flower of all the ladies of the land. He had them all sit high on a tall wooden stand covered with fine cloths of gold and silk.

When King Meliadus saw this great strategy that King Artù had ordered, and knowing the reason it had been done, he himself thought of another device. He summoned to the field all the little boys up to ten years old, that is, all who were of noble birth. He made them all stand on the bank of the great river, saying to his knights that each one must be valiant and bold, for if they were losing, whichever of them had a son, that boy would be thrown into the river and drowned.

Meanwhile, King Artù had a hundred knights and many foot soldiers standing guard at his camp. But now the story leaves King Meliadus and King Artù, because each one stands bold against the other, and we will return again to tell of Lancilotto, to tell how he acquired Dolorosa Guardia, and took it away from the villianous Saracen.

VIII.

The masters of stories say that as Lancilotto was riding along, all alone and coming to the end of his fine adventures, he arrived at a fair hermitage. There he dismounted, because the hour was late, and knocked on the grating of the cell and called out. Immediately there appeared to him a holy white-haired hermit, who said, "May eternal Majesty be ever praised! Who might this be who calls?"

Lancilotto answered, "As it is worthy, let it be blessed and praised. I am a knight who has need of your hospitality."

At that, the hermit opened the door, and when they were both inside, the hermit shared with him half the provisions that the angel had brought him. In the morning, when dawn was bright, Lancilotto arose and rearmed himself, mounting his horse to start on his way. As he looked directly in front of him, he saw a castle inside a strong fortress, surrounded by twelve silver towers made by magic and necromancy. He inquired of the hermit who the guardian of this noble fortress might be, and the hermit replied that the castle, which was known as Dolorosa Guardia, was held by an evil Saracen, of the race of giants, who was called Federiel. He said that the castle and the fortress were full of gold and silver, but that there was no way anyone could get inside, that a bird could scarcely fly there except by this one side.

"And God be my witness, the road is guarded as I tell you: at two leagues from the castle a hundred horsemen stand day and night; a little farther on there are two hundred, and nearer the castle four hundred more stand guard continually. The castle has twelve encircling walls all made of precious stones, and inside the walls are thirty towers, four of fine gold, twelve of silver, six of diamond, and eight of sapphire. The man who holds it is the fiercest Saracen in the world, the son of Caraone the Great of Granchole, the first giant to come from the faraway islands. I beg that you do not go by this road, for you will be killed."

But Lancilotto replied, "Friend of God, I want to take upon myself the adventure of conquering that castle, and taking it away from the Saracen dog. I ask that you pray to God to give me strength and power." And so Lancilotto left him there and rode until middle tierce.

When he was two leagues from Dolorosa Guardia, he encountered in his way a hundred horsemen who shouted against him, "Don't come any nearer, knight, if you don't want to die!"

But Lancilotto without delay lowered his lance and began to attack them, and did such deeds of arms that he put all hundred in great dismay. When he came to the second guard of two hundred knights he bore himself so

vigorously that out of fear they gave him passage. When he came to the third guard of four hundred knights, Lancilotto had much to do, and the battle was fierce and long; Lancilotto killed more than sixty of them, and put the others to such dismay that out of fear they retreated to the castle.

Then Lancilotto let them go and, dismounting, rested for a while. After refreshing his horse he carefully refastened girth and brace, then taking up his great spear of well-sharpened iron, he asked God to protect him and rode toward the castle. When he came to the first gate, he began to call to the porter in the Saracen language, "*Tales dalena fregis falundas alustendas avrezis eoli perfersarti fiezes.*" To this the gatekeeper answered, "*Eschirimbett eschinbi lecurdire chersi eriperendes efreson.*"[7] And Lancilotto said in their language, "I call to you in the name of your god! Go to your lord and tell him that there is a knight errant at his gate who would be pleased to speak with him."

Then the porter went inside and delivered this message to his lord, and the Saracen said, "By my faith, this must be the man who has killed so many of my people." He came then to the parapet over the gate and called down, "Who are you, vassal, who have done me so much harm?"

Lancilotto replied, "I am a knight from a far country who gladly would come inside this fortress to find out if it is as beautiful there as it is without."

The Saracen answered him, "If you will wait until I am armed, I willl show you the most secure place there is."

Lancilotto said, "Now what are you saying? I came here for no other reason, and not to run away."

The Saracen returned to his palace and told his lady, Nonfizata, how the knight who had done so much damage had challenged him. She said, "Alas, my lord, I have found out through my magic arts that you are about to do battle with the best knight in this world, so be certain that your armor and weapons will not fail you. Still, I find that your end is not to be here or now, since it is to be among many barons and knights, where kings and queens will attend your funeral. Therefore, ride boldly."

The Saracen then armed himself to great advantage and, mounting his horse, prayed to his god to give him the victory. When he came to the gate and was before the knight, without another word one challenged the other, then they met with such force and struck such great blows that their two great lances shattered. Finishing the course, they unsheathed their swords and began a cruel and dangerous battle. Lancilotto struck at the Saracen, but did him no harm, while the Saracen slashed at him so furiously that whatever weapon the young knight used was sent flying to the ground. Lancilotto hit him, and found him harder than a diamond, but the Saracen struck at Lancilotto's shield and split it down the middle. Then the young knight, swelling with fury, hit the Saracen once, then twice, but found him harder than an anvil and could not harm him at all.

Then the Saracen said to Lancilotto, "So you think you will deal me a blow or two! But don't wait for mine!" Then the proud Saracen struck him so fiercely that his armor was all bent and cut to pieces, and most of it was scattered on the ground; he was wounded in every part of his body. The Saracen's armor had not lost so much as a link, and was as fresh as it had been when the battle began. When Lancilotto asked for a rest, the Saracen refused him, saying, "Knight, defend yourself, for now you will receive payment for all you have done to harm me!" Then he gripped his sword with malice and lifted it for Lancilotto's death-blow. When Lancilotto saw that heavy blow coming he felt great fear of dying, for he had lost both his helmet and his shield.

But Iesu Cristo, who will not abandon a faithful Christian, sent Lancilotto good fortune which was worth more to him than strength or courage. As the terrible stroke descended, Lancilotto held his sword up to protect his head, and it cut between the Saracen's gauntlet and arm guard, so that his hand and sword together flew into the weeds. When the pagan saw that he had lost his right hand, he dismounted and begged for mercy, asking that Lancilotto not put him to death and promising to give him the lordship of the fortress and its holdings.

And here might one well say, "O World, World! False to those who have faith in you and then are left cheated!" The Saracen lord was rich and strong and powerful, but in one moment he lost all his lordship.

Lancilotto, seeing that the Saracen had surrendered, said to him, "Knight, you are beaten. If you want to remain in this life, you must agree to go to the city of Camellotto and present yourself to Queen Ginevara on behalf of the new knight. If you refuse, I will kill you."

Right away then the Saracen stripped himself of all his armor except for his sword, remaining dressed in a silken tunic; he bound up his wrist where the blood flowed out. He got back on his horse and, taking leave of his lady, began to ride at a great pace toward the city of Camellotto. Lancilotto stayed behind and entered Dolorosa Guardia. He banished the lady and all of the other people who refused baptism, and changed the name of the fortress so that it became known as Gioiosa Guardia. He had all of their temples pulled down and had a lovely church built in honor of the Holy Trinity, calling it Our Lady Maria of Humility. Then Lancilotto rested there and enjoyed lovely days.

Meanwhile the Saracen rode day and night, so that one day followed upon another. Soon he found himself on the crest of the great mountain called Nervana, on the border of Longres and Liones. Looking down across the plain, he saw two mighty armies waiting on the banks of the great river; these were the armies of King Artù and King Meliadus. Upon a hillock he saw eighty knights and a great multitude of foot soldiers guarding King Artù's camp. Then the infidel knight, like a Saracen dog, rode hard into their

midst: "I had rather die bravely than live in a Christian prison."

He gave up all hope of life and, calling on his god, took his sword in his left hand and rode into the middle of those eighty knights dealing such blows and doing such deeds of arms it was a marvel to see. He killed more than ten of them, then rode on past the knights and threw himself in among the foot soldiers, where he died. King Artù and the other knights marvelled greatly, not knowing where this brave warrior had come from or who he might have been.

But Queen Ginevara said to herself, "By my faith, this was some worthy knight who was beaten by our new cavalier, and he was coming to us as a prisoner." Then they had him taken and buried with great honor, for it seemed to them that he was worthy of it.

IX.

The true story tells that Lancilotto stayed in Gioiosa Guardia and had much joy and solace there, when a messenger appeared in the hall telling him that King Artù was camped near the city of Liones to go against the high king Meliadus, and that it seemed King Artù might well lose, so valiant was King Meliadus' army. On hearing this news Sir Lancilotto took arms without delay, then assigning the man he trusted most as viceroy of the castle, he disguised his insignia and rode one day after another past fields, hills, and deep forests so that he soon reached the plain where King Artù's army was camped. He had himself announced there as the knight of the curved sword.

But when he came to the bank of the great river, and to the wooden stand where all the ladies were assembled, he saw the one he had longed to see all the time he had been adventuring in distant lands, that is, Queen Ginevara. Then he leaned far over his saddlebow to look at her angelic face, and began to think about her great beauty, and his heart and soul were so filled with looking at her that all other thought and purpose fled. He dropped his reins and forgot himself, and seemed like a knight afflicted. Then his horse wandered toward the river to drink, to a place where many squires were watering their horses. When these saw the knight coming toward them so dazed, they held his horse and took away his lance, shield, and sword, then one of them dipped his flask full of water and threw it in his face.

All at once Lancilotto returned to his senses and, thinking he had been

robbed, leaped off his horse and with his bare fist demanded the weapons that had been taken from him. Then he remounted and rode back toward the ladies' grandstand, beginning again to look at the angelic face of Queen Ginevara, and to lose himself again in the thought of how beautiful she was. Then one of the ladies in waiting, the niece of the King of Organia, spoke thus to the queen, "Ah, my lady, what proud deeds I saw done this morning by that knight who stares at you so.[8] For courtesy, send him a lance and a garland and have him told that you want him to fight for love of you against the people of King Meliadus."

Then the queen said, "Alas, dear God, could this be the new knight with his banner disguised?"

The maiden replied, "By my faith, I believe it is so, for many good knights have the custom of disguising their banners and shields so they can go about more secretly."

Then the queen sent him a lance and a garland, and asked him to fight against King Meliadus' army. As soon as he received her commission, he was not slow but crossed the river very quickly and began to attack the guard of the enemy's camp. He gave the first knight he encountered such a blow with his lance that he sent him dead to the earth, then did the same to a second, a third, and a fourth. Before his lance broke, he had accounted for eight, then he took his sword in hand and did such deeds of arms it was a marvel to see. When King Meliadus saw this knight's valor, he sent four hundred knights to guard the river so that King Artù's men could not get across, but Lancilotto kept on felling knights and barons until finally his horse was killed under him and he was left on foot. Then King Meliadus rode up to him, saying, "Surrender yourself, knight, or you die!"

But the young knight said, "Sire, I will never give up, because I had rather die than surrender in such a way."

Then the high prince Galeotto, impressed by the courage of this knight, said to him, "Surrender yourself to me, young warrior, for I promise and swear to you, you will have no bad reward for the many knights of mine you have killed if, for love of me, you will break a lance against King Artù's men. Then you may ask a boon of me, anything you desire, and I swear I will do it."

Then the knight answered, "If you will equip me with a good horse and a lance, and give me your word that I may have any gift I ask of you, I will fight for you against my king until the lance is broken, but I will do nothing with the sword."

At that point Galeotto gave him his glove; then he gave him a swift horse and a strong lance of well-sharpened iron. Lancilotto remounted and, gripping the lance, crossed back over the river and began to attack all the people of King Artù's army, sending each one he jousted with tumbling to the ground. Because of the headway he made, King Meliadus, Prince Galeotto,

and their knights followed him easily, shouting all together, "Viva the knight of Liones!" They did such feats of arms it was a wonder to see; the battle was long and hard, and many good men died there on both sides.

But finally King Meliadus was pursuing King Artù and all his people over the field. Artù, seeing himself thus hunted, ordered that the siege be raised, but Lancilotto, when he realized that King Artù was retreating, said to himself, "This must not be!" And he used his lance so hard that it broke.

Approaching King Artù, he said to him, "As you hold life dear, do not go forward, but turn at once to the pavilion of the ladies where your crown will be honored and welcomed." Then Lancilotto himself went quickly forward before the high prince Galeotto, saying, "Sire, I have fought for you against my lord, and have broken a lance in your service, as I promised I would. Now you owe me the boon which you promised."

Galeotto said, "Ask bravely; I'm ready to give you anything." So Lancilotto made this request: "Sire, stop this battle, and go before King Artù and surrender yourself to him, swearing to be his liege man for the rest of your life."

These words made Galeotto the saddest man in the world, and he said to Lancilotto, "Knight, if I had forseen this before I promised you a boon, I would have stopped fighting and gone away. But since I have promised, I cannot go back on my word, so I will give up the battle."

Then the high prince Galeotto, accompanied by King Meliadus and most of the other barons and knights, came before King Artù and vowed to obey Artù's commands and be loyal to his crown. Thus there came under King Artù's rule eighteen kingdoms captured by the sword arm. Artù, seeing himself so greatly honored, was very joyful, and said, "You, now, King Meliadus, what will you do? Will you obey my crown, or shall we begin our war once more?"

Then Meliadus answered, "In good faith, Sire, I would first have all my lands burnt and all my people killed before I would surrender to anyone through fear or cowardice; but if I myself choose it, I will serve you or any person. For I am determined to live and die free, and after my death come what may!"

At this point Lancilotto got to his feet and cried, "By the honor of God and His Mother!" (In this way he got the attention of King Artù and the others.) "King Artù, I have heard that King Meliadus is the bravest and most courteous knight in the world, and that he has in his kingdom neither lady nor child who does not delight in freedom; this is the king who would serve you and honor you through his own free will. Therefore I ask you, for the service I can do you and by the love you bore my father King Bando, that peace and concord be made between you and King Meliadus, and that you stop this war."

"By my faith," said King Artù to Lancilotto, "I call that man a fool who can have a thing for love and who prefers to take it by force. One man's

service given for love is worth that of a hundred men taken by force. Therefore know, Lancilotto, that for love of you I had rather have King Meliadus for a friend and a companion than to fight with him in any way. Let peace be made between the two of us."

Then the two kings took each other by the hand and sat down side by side on two rich seats of ivory; to confirm the peace they exchanged their sword belts and their crowns. Then, to celebrate their joy, every baron and knight began to play at arms upon the fields.

Now we leave the telling of this story to speak of the peace made between the two kings and to tell how, because of this peace, King Meliadus took for his wife a maiden of gentle birth, a lady from the family of King Bando of Benoich, to whom was born the brave, wise, gentle, courteous Sir Tristano.

X.

The true story tells that King Artù, King Meliadus, the high prince Galeotto, Lancilotto, and all the other barons of noble birth were gathered to celebrate their joy at the peace made among them. And being moved by this happiness, King Artù rose and said to King Meliadus, "Sire, if you will, I ask that you do me a favor. I am moved to ask two things: the one is to better confirm our peace; the other is that you are such a brave knight and noble king and lord of a mighty realm that if you do not leave an heir, it will be a great pity. And so I wish, if it pleases you, that you would take a wife. I myself will give you a beautiful lady, the daughter of King Andremo the Old of Sobicio and of my sister Queen Felice, and cousin to King Bando of Benoich. She is in this camp now with Queen Ginevara; her name is Eliabella."

King Meliadus replied to King Artù, "Sire, you know that I had sworn never to take a wife, and to remain a virgin forever until my death, but since I wish to please you and since she is of your family, I am well satisfied to do as you wish. But before I promise myself to this lady, I would like to see her."

Then King Artù summoned Eliabella without delay, and she came accompanied by Queen Ginevara and other women of the court, and she came together with a lovely woman and a very small knight who had been her fosterparents and teachers; the knight was called Sir Ferragunze the Courtly.[9] When King Meliadus saw the lovely maiden, he was very pleased, and

said that he was content to marry her. So King Artù gave him the lady and all the kingdom of Sobicio, and King Meliadus married her and made her queen of Liones.

Sir Ferragunze and his wife Verseria, seeing their lady so honorably wed, were very happy. The small knight came forward, saying, "My lord King Meliadus, what gift will you give me in return for the great service I have done for your lady, and for the great love I bear her? For I have taught her and nurtured her as if she were my own daughter, but now she is obliged to you, and without your good will cannot reward me."

Then King Meliadus said, "Knight, I will gladly make you a gift, as great a one as your condition merits. So tell me your worth, and I will reward you according to your value."

The small knight said, "Sir King, write down four things to my credit: first, that I am of noble birth; second, that I was never afraid of one knight or even two; third, that I have never been jealous of my wife; and the fourth is that wine has never taken my memory. These are the four things I boast."

Then King Meliadus said, "Sir knight, I will do for you whatever seems just." Know that it was the custom at that time for anyone who asked for a gift from the king or the queen first to boast about himself, then the gift was made according to the truth of the boast. Thus different gifts were given to a knight than to a page, and awards to the brave were other than those given to the cowards.

King Artù spoke, "Meliadus, if this knight has as much virtue in him as he boasts he has, he is worthy of great honor. But first I want to test whether he is truly as he says he is."

So King Meliadus secretly called twenty-four knights to a narrow pass, and told them that if Ferragunze the Courtly tried to get through, they should attack him and seem to be trying to kill him, and should take careful notice of the way he behaved. They promised to do as he commanded. Then Meliadus sent for Sir Ferragunze and asked if he would carry a message to the Castle Rubisco, and tell the viceroy to bring him the keys of the land and the taxes which he owed, and Ferragunze replied that he was ready to obey. He armed himself quickly, mounted, and began the journey. Coming to the deep pass in the wilderness, he encountered the twenty-four knights who all shouted at him, "Hallo, wicked baron, don't come any closer or you die!"

Then they began to attack him furiously. When he found himself in such a predicament, Sir Ferragunze defended himself bravely and behaved nobly and well, and some of them he struck and some of them struck him. The knights, who did not fight as hard as they could have, gave way to him so that he could go on. When they returned to the king they told him how the small knight had come right in among them and borne himself nobly.

The next day, Ferragunze returned and reported on his embassy, but said

nothing of the deeds he had done. In this he showed great wisdom; the wise man speaks of it when he says, "If one does not praise himself he is praised; whoever boasts of himself too much loses the prize for the thing he boasts of, because the boast is then the prize for the thing that ought to be rewarded. One who does not boast may hope for a reward."[10]

Having proved Ferragunze on his first point, the two kings wanted to test him on a second, so King Meliadus had a great feast prepared for which there was a provision of roasts, hams, cheeses, and well-seasoned pies the like of which had never been seen. He summoned thirty knights to sit at the table, among them Ferragunze, who did not know that the king was doing this to test him. Since with all these spicy foods they had good, strong wine without any water, they soon began to drink like Germans, and joke like Greeks, and sing like Frenchmen, and dance like Moors, and make such revels that before the tables were taken away they all fell asleep like Englishmen, except for Ferragunze, who was as wise and reasonable as he had been at the start. Because of this the two kings were very impressed with him.

XI.

King Artù and King Meliadus had tested two of Ferragunze's boasts; now they wished to try him on a third, that is, to find out if he were jealous of his wife. King Artù summoned his nephew Sir Calvano and explained the test they wanted to make of the small knight. He asked Calvano to go to Verseria's pavilion and begin a conversation with her, acting very amorous and flirtatious, but always respecting her honor: he should only *seem*, not *do*. The king said, "Then if Ferragunze should come into the pavilion, make it look even more as if you are making love to her."

Calvano answered, "Sire, I'll do it gladly." You must know that the king chose Sir Calvano for this task because the young knight often enjoyed the company of ladies. He was said to be a great lover, and was the one the other knights were most suspicious of.

At that, the king summoned Ferragunze and asked if he would play a game of chess. When the small knight said yes, the king sent for a board and they began to play. When they were in the middle of the game, the king said, "Ferragunze, by my faith, I have the best of this game and I am the winner."

But the knight said, "Saving your crown, I have the better part of this game than you."

Then the king said, "I will wager one of the queen's veils[11] against one of your wife's."

And the knight replied, "If you will wait for me until I return, I will get it and wager it gladly."

"Go and get it then," said the king, "and I will send for mine."

When Ferragunze had gone to his pavilion, King Artù changed a pawn on his opponent's side, saying to himself, "If the knight is angry when he returns, he will not notice the trick." This proves the words of the wise man, which are "*Ira impedit animum*: anger obstructs the rational soul, which cannot then follow the true way."

When Ferragunze came to his pavilion, he found his wife and Sir Calvano talking very closely with each other. He said, "Lady, from where you are, toss me the key of your strongbox." She did, and he opened it, taking out the veil and returning to King Artù. When he was seated again at the board he looked at it and said, "Sire, this pawn is changed from its place."

He was perfectly cheerful and not unhappy, thus the two kings had proved the third boast. They had no need to prove the fourth, for it was clear that Sir Ferragunze was of knightly lineage and descended from the families of kings.

When the two kings had proved that he was worth what he had boasted, they called him before them in the presence of Lancilotto and the high prince Galeotto and many other barons and knights, saying, "Ferragunze, we are certain that you spoke the truth when you boasted before us, but before you receive our gift, we would like to know where so much virtue comes from."

Then Ferragunze answered the two kings, "Anyone who wants it can have this virtue of mine. If I have no fear of one knight or two, that is nothing to marvel at: I always remember the time Uter Pandragon died, when we were keeping guard in the city of Liones. I loved then a noble lady with a great love, but I could never speak with her except in secret. Wanting to see her one night, I got on my horse with my squire behind me, so he could watch the horse for me. As we were riding across the field we met the sentry, who wanted to know who we were; but as I was afraid of being recognized, I said nothing. Then he threw a spear at me. It missed me, but it curved, its iron point piercing the body of my squire, who died at once while I am still alive. Therefore I am of the opinion that the time and the hour and the place where a man must die is determined. Why should I not be brave, since I have to live until the appointed time?

"Also if I am not jealous of my wife, that is nothing to cause any wonder. I remember when I was castellan of the castle whose lord is Sir Sanso the Strong. I had under my command 560 knights and a thousand foot soldiers when Lorgoreale Fretano, a Saracen, held us in siege. In all the castle there was only one woman to serve us in our need. It happened one day we made a foray far into the enemy's territory, to the castle of Semurano, where we

took and brought back a great many prisoners. One of them was a highborn lady, whom we escorted back with great joy. But when our lady of the castle saw her, she was furiously unhappy, calling out, 'So you've come in here, whore, to replace me with those I've served so long!' And we had great trouble to defend our poor prisoner, for our lady wanted to murder her.

"When this lady with so many men could stand no rival, how could I expect my lady to be content with me alone? If my lady is virtuous, I can be sure of her, and if she is bad, still I could not watch her all the time, and my jealousy would not make her good. Thus the proverb wisely says, 'Don't punish a good wife, and if she is wicked, it's not worth the trouble.'

And if wine never steals my memory, it never would anyone's who takes it the way I do. For I never drink unless I want to for the sake of true thirst. What a man drinks for delight and for no true need is converted into fumes, and makes his temper fierce, and mounts to his brain, and takes over his stomach. Thus he loses reason and memory, because the stomach cannot endure. Thus speaks the wise man: 'Wine is not to blame if you make a fool of yourself, but rather you are, because you took such delight in drinking.' And if I boasted and said that I am nobly bred, that is not bad, for any person can be noble who with fine customs, lovely manners, and sweet words behaves with courtesy."

At that, King Artù praised the knight greatly and King Meliadus made him viceroy of the kingdom of Sobicio for five years. Everyone celebrated joyfully, and the celebration lasted ten days. Then by command all the tents, shelters, and pavilions were taken down, and each king, baron, and knight returned to his own country. King Meliadus returned to the city of Liones with his lady and all of his barony, and King Artù, Queen Ginevara, and all the other ladies, barons, and knights errant went back to the city of Camellotto.

And then Lancilotto loved Queen Ginevara so much, that they did their best in such a way that he made the payments on the delightful pledge that they had given each other before, that is, from the look to the kiss, and afterwards to the embrace; then they managed so that their desire turned into delight, and they used each other at their pleasure. And now the tale leaves this story of King Artù, Queen Ginevara, and Sir Lancilotto, and we will tell of the high king Meliadus, and of the birth of the noble, courteous, and gentle Sir Tristano.

XII.

It is said that when King Meliadus returned to Liones with his lady all the people showed great joy, both for the peace and because their king had taken a wife, for they had far rather be ruled by Meliadus and his descendants than by any other lord, because their king was a kind and courteous lord to them. By God's grace Eliabella soon became pregnant, and all sorts of people showed great happiness about it.

But after a little while King Meliadus went hunting with many other barons, as his custom was. Hunting thus through the great desert of Medilontas, the king all alone began to follow a deer, and he followed so long and so far that he lost his companions. Then he went to the Fontana del Dragone, and here dismounted to rest and let his horse drink. When he had rested for a while, there came a beautiful damsel who said to the king, "Sire Meliadus, may Cristo our Lord give you a good life."

The king answered, "Lady, you are well met."

And she said, "King Meliadus, I tell you truly that if I were sure you were as bold as others say you are, I would set you on the highest and most noble venture that ever a knight brought to an end."

The king replied, "Lady, for my own sake I am not worthy, but if you please I will come with you for your sake and lend the power of my arms."

And the lady said she was well pleased. Then King Meliadus set out with her, and they rode along a narrow path until they came in the middle of the night to a beautiful castle which was called the Torre del' Incantamento. It belonged to this lady, who was known as the Wise Damsel. After they dismounted, the lady took the king by the hand and led him into a room enchanted in such a way that when the king entered it, he no longer remembered Queen Eliabella his lady, nor his knights and barons, nor his kingdom. All his thoughts were of the damsel who stood before him: he took with her delight and pleasure, and had not a care for any other thing. His barons, those who had been hunting with him, went searching and calling through the wilderness. When they could not find him they called themselves the saddest knights in the world and did not cease lamenting and grieving all that night; thus they went searching for three days. Not finding him, they made a great lament and complaint, and went back to the city.

Queen Eliabella, for her dear lord's sake, was the saddest lady in the world; she could not stop crying, and lay all that night in torment and misery. In the morning, with her lady in waiting, she rode into the wilderness to see if she could find out anything about her new husband, whether he might be alive or dead. Thus she went searching hard for him, but found neither trace nor news.

All the barons and knights of the realm went searching no less hard than she, some here, some there, in every way, but in no way could they find him, for the tower he had gone to was in the heart of the wilderness. It is true that at that time the greatest part of the world was a wilderness; also the Wise Maiden had made her tower and dwelling in such a valley of the place that no one could find it except by a little path, and that she covered over with spiny plants in such a way that it could not be seen, nor would anyone know how to recognize it.

As the queen rode with her lady through the harsh forest, she went continually making a great lament. She wept for her lord because she could find no one anywhere who might tell her news of him, and she did not know if he were alive or dead. Riding across a great hillside in the wilderness and looking across the slope, she saw before her an unarmed knight who was riding in the guise of a great vavasor. When they met, she greeted him courteously, then asked him, "My lord, let me know if you can tell me any news of King Meliadus, who is lost in this forest."

And the knight, who was called Merlino the Prophet, answered, "Know, queen, that lost things cannot ever return. I assure you that King Meliadus will be found; still, you will never see him again." Having spoken these words he left and went on his way.

The queen thought very hard about the words this prophet had said. When she came to the crest of a great mountain she dismounted; beyond her was a great valley of the forest. She began to weep bitterly.

The lady in waiting said, "Queen, why do you weep and lament like this? It is making you all pale."

The queen answered and said, "My companion, I am afraid that we can't change the news, for this creature I bear in my body is kicking and turning very much."

At that, she got off her horse and rested a little, all the while making complaint and lament. Soon she began to weep even more, and cry out, and call on the Holy Blessed Mother to come to her aid, for the hour of her child's birth had come. The damsel comforted her, saying, "Could you not ride a little more, so we could get out of the forest and find some habitation?"

The queen responded panting, like one who was laboring and in great anguish, and said no—"You see, I could not possibly." And in such a way, like a lady, she began again to cry and call upon God and on the Queen

of Paradise. After such labor that she could hardly bear it, by the grace of God, the queen gave birth to a very beautiful male child.

Seeing him so lovely she praised the Queen of Heaven and asked the damsel to lay him in her arms. Holding him, with tears and sighs she began to say, "My darling son, I see you are as noble and lovely a creature as there could be in this world. I bless you, and may our lord Iesu Cristo bless you and make you gracious in this world, skillful, wise, and brave. Because of you I am the saddest lady in the world and because of you I am about to die in great pain, for I have given you birth all comfortless in this savage place. So that you will remember my pain and my death—for it comes to me and I can feel it—I will give you a name: I want you to be called Tantri. But it will be a more beautiful name with the "Tri" before the "tano," so I will call you Tritan."

Then she put the little boy in the arms of her lady in waiting, and begged her to take care of him. She prayed to God and His Blessed Mother to have mercy on her sins, and at that, her soul left her body. Now the queen had passed from this life, and her damsel, seeing the queen her lady was dead, cried out with the greatest complaint in the world, so that her wailing made the wilderness resound.

XIII.

At that point, as the true story tells, two knights who were brothers were riding through the wilderness searching for King Meliadus, for they were two of the best allies the king had. Hearing the great lament of the damsel, they rode in that direction, and when they found her they saw the queen was dead, and the damsel held the baby boy in her arms. Then they asked what all this was, and the damsel told them everything that had happened, and how the queen had died in childbirth, and how this was the child she had borne. When they heard this, they drew aside and consulted with each other, saying, "Truly we see that the queen is dead, and the king cannot be found. Let us do this: let us kill the boy, and then the entire kingdom will be ours." And what one knight said, the other affirmed.

When the damsel realized what they were saying, she began to make the greatest complaint in the world, weeping bitterly. She fell on her knees before

the two knights and begged them not to harm the boy, swearing by the sacrament of the mass to keep him in such places and in such a way that no news of him or of her would be known, pleading piteously and skillfully.

Then the knights commanded the damsel to go away and take the baby out of the kingdom and even farther. She rode away with the boy in her arms, and for three full days they lived in the desert on the juice of wild apples.

The two knights took the queen's body and put it on a palfrey. They brought it back to the city, saying they had found her like that. The great ladies of the land, looking at the queen, knew she had given birth, knowing it by certain signs familiar to women. They asked where the child was, but the knights said they knew nothing about it.

The next day, Merlino the Prophet arrived. When he came to the palace, he commanded that a council be called, a council of the great barons and other good people of the city. When the barons had gathered, Merlino got to his feet and said to them, "Dear and noble lords, if you want to follow my counsel, I will show you your king, and I will also show you his most beautiful son, born to the queen. And both of them are living."

When they heard these words, they all said they were ready to do as he commanded. Then Merlino had the two knights held prisoner, and had sixty knights and three hundred foot soldiers armed and sent to the tower of the Wise Damsel to take the king who was being kept there. He commanded that they put her to death; otherwise, they could accomplish nothing. Then Merlino summoned a knight of Gaules who had served King Meliadus for a long time, and who was a knight of good family, very brave, noble, and loyal. His name was Governale the Thoughtful. Then Merlino said to him, "Knight, if you wish to be as loyal and concerned as I believe you are, I will give you on this day a baby boy truly born to King Meliadus, a boy who will be lord of Liones. He is the loveliest child, and will become the noblest and most courteous knight in the world."

And Governale said, "Merlino, if you will put him into my care, I promise and swear to you to guard him and care for him as loyally as if he were my own son."

At that, Merlino and Governale mounted and rode out of the city and rode until they came into the great wilderness, where they went searching all around. In the middle of the forest they found the Fontana del Lione and before the fountain was the first stone Merlino had erected, with letters carved in it saying: "Here will gather, for their quality and for their government, three noble knights."

Merlino said, "Governale, do you know what these letters say?"

Governale replied, "Truly, I have read them, but I still do not know who the three new valiant knights may be."

Then Merlino said, "Know, Governale, that the three worthy knights of

whom the stone letters speak and who will be here are for one, Lancilotto, for another, the prince Galeotto, and the third will be Sir Tristano."

But if anyone should ask me how the three brave knights would come together at that stone, I would tell them according to what I have found in the good book which is the source of all the high tales of the Tavola. That book belonged to Sir Viero of Guascogna, a kinsman of Carlo Magno of Francia, and at present is owned by Sir Garo, or rather Gaddo, de' Lanfranchi of Pisa. That book tells and shows truly how this was the stone where the three new knights of the wild beast assembled. This Merlino meant when he built the Tavola Ritonda, about the character a bold knight ought to have: the first stone, that is, the first foundation a knight who desires to be noble should have, is a heart in love; then he should be honest, courteous, and loyal. At this stone would gather the three knights I have mentioned, all having this foundation of love and courtesy.

Yet so much they failed, in that they were inexperienced, because in their loves they were neither secret nor wise: rather they were knights of the wild beast. Like wild animals they sought their delight inordinantly, disregarding other relationships: thus the three knights practiced their love. Thus in the story it is said that they were naive and not wise. Sir Tristano indeed had an excuse for this in the love potion, for more reasons than one reads.

Know that as Merlino and Governale were riding through the wilderness they came to a great valley in the depths of the forest where they found the damsel with the baby boy in her arms. Seeing the knights, she tried to run away and hide herself, but Merlino, who knew her and understood, rode around in front of her and made her stop. He took the child from her arms and embraced him, then gave him to Governale to hold. Governale received him with great love, than gave him back to the damsel, and they all rode toward the city.

When they got there, they went straight to the palace and found that King Meliadus had come home. Merlino showed him his son, and asked that he give the child into the care of Governale of Gaules; then after Merlino took leave, he went on his way.

King Meliadus showed great joy and delight in his son, and asked the damsel if he had been baptized, and if he had a name. She answered that the queen, in remembrance of her great sorrow, had given him the name Tristano, but that he had not been baptized. Then the king had that done, and reconfirmed the name the queen had given him, Tristano.

Afterwards, the king had the two knights seized who had brought the queen's body to the city, and he had their heads cut off, and to the damsel who had saved the baby and taken care of the queen he gave a rich and lovely castle, telling her to keep it for her pleasure. Thus the king rewarded the two treacherous knights for their treachery, and the loyal lady for her loyalty. Then they found a woman who had recently given birth and had

Tristano nursed; and always Governale kept a careful watch over him.

After many years King Meliadus, desiring more children, took a second wife. She was Queen Agia, the daughter of King Bramo, brother of the good Duke Bramante. When Queen Agia came to Meliadus' court and saw the boy Tristano so handsome, so agile and charming and tall,[12] she hated the child furiously, and was filled with jealousy. She vowed to have one son or more so that the king would show such love for them as she saw he felt toward Tristano.

Soon she became pregnant, and when her time came she was delivered of a lovely boy. The king named him Allegreno, because Queen Agia was the happiest woman in the world when her beautiful child was born. But still she hated Tristano fiercely, because he had been born first and would inherit the kingdom. Hating him so, she said to herself, "I am the saddest woman in the world because Tristano will be king and wear the crown, and my son will be his subject."

She thought day and night of how she might find a way for Tristano to be killed, because her son would then be lord. She ordered a potion mixed with poison, but made to seem like fine wine, and set it in a window ledge she thought was a secret enough place. But one day at noon the king rose from sleeping beside her and, looking at that window, saw a beaker of what seemed like good wine. He was thirsty, so he lifted it to his lips; it appeared to be an act of God.

The queen saw him and cried out, "Sire, don't drink, don't drink it!"

The king said, "Why shouldn't I?"

She answered simply, "Because it was not made for you." But then by God's will she suddenly changed; her face and her voice changed, and the king saw it.

"How now, lady," said he. "If the drink is not good and true, then why do you keep it here? Truly I want to know." The king was very suspicious, seeing her look so strange. He said again, "Look here, wife, once and for all, I want to know why you have ordered this potion, and why you keep it here, and what it is. Tell me the truth!"

And she told him, like a woman with no will of her own, how she had had the drink made for Tristano.

Then the king called his barons and counsellors into the great hall, and had a hound brought in and forced to drink the poison. As soon as the dog had swallowed enough, it fell down dead. When the king saw that, he told his barons how the queen had ordered this drink because she wanted to kill his son Tristano, and he commanded his judges to judge her and sentence her according to law. The chief judge sentenced the queen to be burned at the stake after ten days, giving her time to repent of her sin.

Because of that sentence all the court was heavy with gloom, knowing that their lady was going to be burnt. Tristano, who was then ten years

old, saw all the sorrow and went to his tutor Governale saying, "What is the matter? Why are all the people so fearful and worried?"

Governale answered, "My son, they grieve for the queen. She is sentenced to be burnt and destroyed by fire because she was going to poison you."

When he heard this Tristano went at once to the king his father and knelt before him, saying, "My father and my lord, for God's love I pray you will grant me a boon, for you know this is the first thing I've ever asked you for."

Said the king then, "Ask boldly, my son, for whatever you want."

Tristano replied, "Sire, for a guarantee, give me your glove."

Then the king began to laugh and said, "Barons or knights, counts or marchesas, all these must give their gloves; but a king has no need of such a custom, for his word is his charter."

So Tristano spoke: "My father, I ask for God's love and for courtesy and for my sake, that you set the queen free."

The king frowned. "Tristano, who told you to say these words?"

The boy answered, "Sire, nobody made me say them, nothing but my own will. The honor and the shame of the queen belongs also to me and to my brother, and I don't want anyone to die because of me!"

Then the king postponed the queen's sentence for a hundred years, and forgave her himself for Tristano's sake. He prayed that God would give his son a long, good life, for if the boy lived he would surely become learned and wise. But pardoning the queen proved the truth of the proverb and of the scripture which says, "When a man serves and pleases a traitor, he disserves and displeases loyal men." Tristano, in defending the queen, offended himself, for she never ceased to envy him and wish him evil, and she made another potion, stronger and deadlier than the first. This she hid very carefully in her room, waiting for a chance to give it to Tristano.

But God the father, who knows and sees all, recognizes everything for what it is; out of all this he made a great miracle. One day the queen's nurse came into the chamber carrying the child Allegreno in her arms. He asked for a drink, so she looked around and chanced upon the beaker of poison in the window ledge. Since it looked like good pure wine she held it to the little boy's mouth, and as soon as he tasted it, he died.

When the nurse saw that, she began to shriek and wail, making such a noise that the sound of it drew the king and queen and many barons and knights. When she saw her baby was dead, the queen was the saddest, most miserable woman in the world, and she said to the nurse, "Alas, traitor, why have you killed my boy?"

But the nurse, sobbing, answered, "Saving your grace, it was not I who killed him. It was the person who put the potion in this flask, for I thought it was good wine, but it is poison."

The queen, hearing this, was quiet in her sorrow. But the king, who was wise and wary the second time, knew that the one to blame for this death

stood there before him, and he was the saddest, most miserable king in the world. He said to himself that in this bad work God had made a miracle, for the queen, who had wanted to kill a child born to another woman, had been made to kill her own.

When he knew his wife's great sin, the king never spoke to her again. From that day on he no longer lay with her, and he warned Governale to keep watch over Tristano, and commanded that the boy have nothing to eat or drink except from Governale's own hand. Their food was always specially prepared, and three servants tasted it before they did.

The queen was the most miserable woman in the world because her baby was dead, and still Tristano was always before her, always so good, and always becoming better. He did lovely deeds, wore noble clothes, and behaved with fine courtesy. Watching him become so graceful and agile in body caused her such sorrow at heart that it was unbearable. She knew how well-taught Tristano was, and how well he learned, and how everyone who saw him loved him immediately.

After a while, King Meliadus went hunting in the great wilderness with a large number of knights, all disarmed, for pleasure. While he was hunting the king was attacked by twelve armed knights, his mortal enemies even though they were his kin; they were then occupying a castle which they unjustly held. Since they found the king companionless and unarmed, far from his barons and friends, they struck him and killed him. But when Tristano was grown and had become a knight, he made a great vendetta, as you will hear. The barons of the country, seeing their lord dead, were the saddest men in the world. They took his body back to the city and had him buried with great honor in a rich and noble sepulchre in the great cathedral of the city, Santo Aloido.

XIV.

The masters of the story say that the queen watched Tristano after the death of his father. The boy was then twelve years old, and Governale was fearful of the queen's great hatred, so he said, "Look, my son, we ought not stay in this country and be so idle. We should seek out another country where you can learn to fence and handle arms, and to do all that is appropriate to the honor of knighthood so you will be secure in this world and have a name for prowess and courtesy. Thus, if it seems good to you,

I counsel that you leave as lord in this country someone you trust well; then we will go to the court of King Ferramonte in Gaules. There is a great custom of chivalry there, of fencing, riding, and deeds of arms; many noble knights are gathered."

Tristano answered, "My teacher, I am ready to do or say, go or come wherever you want and wherever you please. I want to come with you, wherever you advise." Then they supplied themselves with gold and silver, fine horses and rich armor, and left as lord of the realm an old knight who had been the dearest friend his father ever had, and the most faithful: his name was Sir Palmoano. And Tristano also recommended Queen Agia his stepmother to Sir Palmoano's care, that while she wished to remain in the kingdom to keep and maintain the honor of King Meliadus, he should hold her as lady and greater than those she commands, and that if she wished to change her condition or return to her own country he should give her two rich castles on the mountain of Frabeganda.

After that, Tristano and Governale, with no companions other than their squires, left there and rode one day after another until they were in the kingdom of Gaules, that is Francia; they rode into the city of Parigi where lived Ferramonte, the lord of that country.

At that point, Tristano presented himself before the king, concealing his identity and offering his services. The king received him gladly and loved him very much, both for his beauty and his good service. Here Tristano began to fence and handle arms, and to ride through the city and take part in jousts, and all that he did, he did better than any other man. All the knights and squires marvelled at him, seeing him so well-made and powerful. All the good people loved him, and the other sort envied him greatly; that is not surprising, because the good always love the good and hate the evil ones, while evil and guilty men hate the good. Now we will drop this subject, and turn back to Tristano.

XV.

In this part the story tells that King Ferramonte had a daughter, the gentle and lovely Bellices, who was fifteen years old. She was the lady of the realm, for the king's wife was dead, and he loved his daughter only. Night and day he thought about giving her in marriage to a king's son, to whom he would then give half his kingdom because he had no other heir.

When Bellices saw Tristano, so handsome, graceful, and courteous, she fell quickly in love with him, dreaming constantly about his beauty. She loved him so passionately that she said to herself, "I don't know what will become of me if I can't have my desire!"

Then she summoned Governale into her chamber and told him how much she loved Tristano, and how because of him she could find neither rest nor repose. She asked Governale to be her ambassador, and tell Tristano how much she wished to be the lady of his heart.

Governale replied that he would do it gladly, and on those words they parted, having heard a loud noise and a great thundering of horses. It was Amoroldo of Irlanda returning from the court of King Artù, stopping to visit King Ferramonte, and he had with him seventy knights.

When King Ferramonte saw him, he greeted him with great honor, for King Amoroldo of Irlanda was one of the boldest knights in the world, a knight errant, and one of those because of whom the Tavola Ritonda was loved and honored.

When the barons and knights had dismounted and rested a little, the tables were set out and they went to eat. Amoroldo sat with the king at one table, and Tristano served them, for he was the handsomest and most graceful attendant in the whole court, one who could serve and carve as if it were nothing.

Amoroldo, seeing the young man so handsome and adroit and able to serve, asked the king who he might be, and the king said, "By my faith, I do not know. I don't know where he comes from or who his people might be. The truth is, he came and sought service with me, and he is the most gracious young man in the world, and thus I believe he must be connected with a gracious lineage."

"May God give him prowess," said Amoroldo; "he is so handsome and well-favored."

Then a court fool, who was called Rocchetto, stood up and said, "Amoroldo, Amoroldo, sire, the beauty and prowess of this young man will cost you dear."

Amoroldo laughed at such words, and the king said, "Amoroldo, I don't speak for this time, but at other times this fool has spoken no words that

did not have wisdom in them; his words are not meant as a joke. Know that the other day when a knight of Norgales was eating here he gave the fool a capon's thigh and when the fool took it he said, 'I receive it so that you will never surrender it to another.' And when the knight got up the next morning a lady of the court went to him and asked that he let her hold his sword for a little in her hand, and when she had hold of it she struck the knight with it and killed him instantly."

But Amoroldo, who was bold and proud, held those words as nothing. In this he showed that while a man has youth and riches and nobility, he gives no thought to what might happen to him, and in that he is much at fault, for he is not ready for the things that can happen suddenly.

Now when the barons had eaten they went to rest, and when morning came they armed themselves, mounted, and after taking leave of the king, rode toward Irlanda, their own country.

At that point, Governale called Tristano to him saying, "My son, you are a very fortunate young man to be beloved by the noble maiden Bellices, daughter of such a powerful king." Then he told Tristano all that Bellices had asked him to say. Tristano, whose nature was both noble and firm, replied, "My teacher, truly I will not love Bellices with an unlawful love, for it would be a great disloyalty to dishonor her when I have been so courteously treated. But I will love her and serve her as one ought to love his liege lady; I owe this to her father for the great honor he has done me. I am sure you do not counsel me to do otherwise."

Governale was silent then, very pleased with this response.

But a few days later it happened that Tristano was fencing in a hall of the palace with some other knights and squires. He wore a silken tunic, and his hair was yellower than gold. His face was flushed like a new rose, as beautiful as a girl's and as fresh as a leafy palm tree. The noble Bellices, so much in love, saw him there. She saw that he did not return her love, and she was all consumed for love of him. When she saw him quit the fencing match she stole out softly behind him and caught up with him between two rooms. She threw her arms around his neck and pressed herself so tightly against him that he could not break free, and she began to kiss him like one who because of him can find neither rest nor repose.

All this came about because Bellices was strongly consumed with a great desire for love, love which makes its servants wise and well-bred, which cuts like a knife, and is bitterer than gall and sweeter than a savory apple. As she held Tristano in her arms, Bellices was so filled with delight that all other thoughts deserted her and she desired nothing but the fulfillment of her pleasure and joy. This happened because she knew that the one who loves loyally is joyous in all things, and that out of love all pride, envy, and avarice ceases.[13]

But because Tristano did not respond to her she began to complain bit-

terly, crying out, "Help me, help me, dear, lovely lord," like a maiden drunk with pleasure and full of the desire for love.

XVI.

Now if anyone asks me to which lord Bellices cried for help, I will say that according to the book which is the wellspring of all the others, it says this: the gentle Bellices cried for mercy to the high God of Love, praying to him that since he had bound her heart with love for Tristano, he take and bind Tristano's heart with love for her, so that love might be a sweetness and a single thing between the two of them. And her prayer was just, because no love can be perfect unless both are in love; because Tristano's will was not in accord with Bellices', she was very sorrowful.

She cried and cried, heedless of being heard, until the noise of her complaints drew the king and a number of his barons. As they came into the room, they saw how Bellices held Tristano so tightly in her arms, and the king said, "Daughter, what news is this?"

And she replied, "See this young man who is so full of villiany that he will not yield to do me courtesy, but makes me waste away and die!"

Then the king had Tristano seized and brought into the great hall of the palace. It seemed a great shame to all the people that Tristano might have to die for such a thing, and some said that Bellices was guiltier than the boy. Governale, at that point, was the saddest man in the world. He came before the king, saying, "Sire, I beg of you, do not be too swift to sentence this young man if you are not sure of the truth of the offense."

Then he told the king all about the embassy Bellices had asked him to make to Tristano. The king, hearing this and watching his daughter's face, knew very well that Tristano was not guilty. He said to Governale, "Governale, go on your way. You may be sure that nothing but justice will be done here."

The king had Tristano brought before him, and he also had brought one of his own nephews who had been condemned that week to lose his head for killing a squire. Then he summoned Bellices, saying, "My daughter, here are two young men, and each one is under sentence of death. One is your cousin Brano, and the other is Tristano—no one knows where he comes from. Now I will grant you a boon. Choose the one of these two who delights you more; him I will free, and the other will be beheaded."

Bellices hesitated, thinking how her father must be testing her. She did not want to expose herself in front of so many barons, so she asked for her cousin, saying, "Sire, I want you to pardon Brano. I care nothing for this other one."

Then the king made a great show of beheading Tristano, beginning immediately to read the sentence. Bellices, believing that he really intended to have Tristano killed, cried out, "Father, mercy, for the love of God! I repent! I made the wrong choice, I have not taken the one I really want. I said what I said against my will, but now I beg you for Tristano, my hope, for I love him over all other creatures!"

The king replied, "Daughter, you have what you asked for. Tristano cannot now escape his doom."

"Then father," she said, "if you will not free Tristano for love of me, will you grant me another favor?"

"Anything you desire, except Tristano."

"Then I ask that you behead me with your own two hands, so I will not see the one I love best in the world die."

The king's face turned white when he heard what she wanted, for he knew he had promised her. He was silent.

Bellices said, "Father, the two are one. Either you cut off my head, or for love of me let Tristano go free."

The king replied, "How now, daughter? Do you love Tristano as much as this?"

And she answered, "Look you, father, I love him better than all the world. Would it pleased God he returned my love but he does not."

Then the king knew for certain that Tristano was not guilty, so he pardoned him, and had his nephew's head cut off. Then he summoned Governale, saying, "Tell me, knight, as God is your savior, what country is Tristano from, and who are his people?"

Governale answered, "Sire, this boy is the son of King Meliadus of Liones."

When the king found out that Tristano was the son of the most courteous and noble king who had ever lived, he summoned him and said, "My boy, I don't believe your father had in this world a more loyal or closer friend than I. Therefore I beg that you take Bellices my daughter for your wife, and with her take half my kingdom."

Tristano answered, "Sire, I thank you greatly for the honor and the courtesy you have shown me. But I must not accept your offer of kinship, simply because I am too young, and not yet accustomed to handling arms. It would not do for me to be encumbered with a wife, or any other cares that might constrain me, except those practices which might lead me to a life of chivalry."

The king was content with this, but Governale knew that Bellices' love was still a dangerous thing, and he advised Tristano, saying "My son, since God has saved you from so great a danger, it is not for us to remain in this

court, for I know that Bellices is so much in love with you that you are sure to be compromised again. Let us go, if it pleases you, to Cornovaglia, to the court of King Marco, your uncle. There you can learn best what makes a knight, because it is the school of all the masters who come from everywhere, even though the knights of that country are not bold."

Tristano answered, "My teacher, I am ready to do whatever you want me to do. If you want us to go to Cornovaglia, then we will go, but I don't want King Marco to know who I am, for the special tenderness he might have for me could be a great impediment to my learning what I need to know."

In this Tristano spoke wisely, for there are three principal things which can keep someone from learning what he ought to. The first is too much indulgence by relatives, which blunts the understanding and increases vainglory; the second is bad company, which makes one forgetful, thoughtless, and negligent; the third is hatred or bad will carried in the heart, which makes one forget all other wisdom. Thus spoke the one who was pleased to be thought less of before his prime, so that his intellect would not be marred when he was older, and so that he would not forget to be patient and humble in his heart.

Now, having decided to go, Tristano and Governale took leave of King Ferramonte, and the noble maid Bellices, left behind, knew that Tristano's going made her the saddest maiden in the world. She summoned her most trustworthy squire and asked him to take a message to Tristano, that very day, before he left for Cornovaglia. She said, "Take him my good destrier, the best in the world even if it is so young, and give him my small terrier which is so fine, and give him this letter. But before you go, I want you to watch the death I will die for love of him, so you can testify to the truth about my deed."

Then at once she took her father's sword, placed the pommel on the ground and the point right over her heart, and said, "Heart of my body, Tristano! My love and my delight! Oh hope and joy of all other people! Why have you abandoned me? Oh my sweet hope, you are leaving, and because of this I shall not live another day!"

With these words she let herself fall against the point of the sword, which passed through her body in such a way that the soul escaped without much pain, because she was one with love and after her death her sorrow was gone, the sorrow of loving Tristano.

When the squire saw his lady was dead, he was greatly grieved; still he did not delay, but mounted onto the back of the good destrier and took the little dog in his arms, and carried the letter. He rode in such a way, one day after another, that he caught up with Tristano in the kingdom of Cornovaglia, near Tintoile, in the country where King Marco was lord. Then he saluted Tristano courteously on behalf of Bellices, daughter of King Ferramonte, and in her name gave him the horse and the dog; then afterwards

he put her letter in his hand. Tristano opened it and read it, and this is what he read:

"My sweet friend, my sweet friend, Tristano, my sweet friend, who was loved with good heart and loyal love: because of your leaving your Bellices could no longer meet with you. I was so in love with you because of your great perfection that without your presence I could not live except in heavy torment and grievous martyrdom, so that I was almost dead. And I know certainly that imagining your great beauty and your great cruelty, and how you went away, and how I could no longer see you, as I used to, for pleasure and delight, I would remain in such pain and sorrow that I would not find any rest. And so, since I could not see you, I have killed myself with the same sword with which the king my father was going to cut off your head. Be certain that in my death I have sustained no sorrow or pain, thinking and dreaming how I died for you, the fountain and flower of all gracefulness, the sum of honor and courtesy, full of beauty, angelic and lovely flower. So that you will remember how I killed myself for you, I send you my good horse and my little dog: keep these for love of me. And you should not have so much cruelty in your heart as to answer gentleness with pride, but always keep a loving heart, so that we may meet again in the company of loyal lovers."

When Tristano had read that letter, with many tears he asked the squire, "Valet, is it a true thing that Bellices has died this way?"

And he answered and said, "It is certainly true, for I was there as a witness when she killed herself for you."

Then Tristano mounted the horse that Bellices had sent him, and gave his own to the squire, and they took leave of each other. Tristano and Governale began to ride through the kingdom of Cornovaglia, and thus rode on their journey until they reached the rich city of Tintoile. At the grand palace Tristano presented himself before King Marco and offered his services, but in no way let it be known who he was. The king, seeing that Tristano was so handsome and well-made, and thinking that he was probably the son of some great baron, received him gladly.

Tristano served him well and nobly, earning much love. He was then fifteen years old. He fenced and played at arms and learned to ride, doing nothing else so that he developed his full prowess, becoming a knight resembling his father and all his kinsmen who had been the flowers of knighthood.

XVII.

The masters of the stories say that Tristano had not been long at King Marco's court when King Amoroldo of Irlanda had a great multitude of knights and foot soldiers summoned to his city of Londres, saying to his barons, "My lords, you know that in spite of the embassy I sent to King Marco of Cornovaglia, he still has not sent me the tribute he owes for the past nine years; he does this because he holds me in contempt and cares nothing for my power. Thus I have decided to cross the sea, invade his kingdom, and lay siege to the city of Tintoile until the tribute is doubly paid."

All the barons agreed to this. They supplied themselves with biscuits and meat, ships, galleys, and boats; they had the trumpets, drums, and cymbals sounded and had the bells rung with hammers. When all the people were in the ships, there were 30,700 knights and 60,000 foot soldiers. They raised the sails, and the weather was good, so that by the power of the sirocco they reached the port of Cornovaglia at Tintoile in sixteen days, where they disembarked, camping on the shore half a league from the city. Then Amoroldo summoned two great barons and sent them as ambassadors to King Marco, telling them that within thirty days the tribute owed for the past nine years must be paid double, under penalty of half of it and their lives as well. When the two ambassadors came before King Marco, they dispensed their message. At that news, the king was the saddest lord in the world, and all of his barons showed great sorrow.

Tristano, seeing everyone in the court so downcast, marvelled greatly at it, and asked an old knight about it, saying, "Where does so much sadness come from, so suddenly?"

The old knight told Tristano the whole story, how King Felissi had put them all in Irlanda's power, and how Amoroldo had just come for the tribute owed him for the past nine years. Tristano asked, "By what right does he claim it?"

"By none other than his great power, because he is one of the boldest knights in the world, ruling a strong, great kingdom, with some of the best knights in the world."[14]

Tristano said, "Sir knight, since Amoroldo does not make his demands justly, why don't we give battle? I have seen many knights in this realm, and many fine people, great barons, and much riches."

The old knight said, "You may be sure that in the kingdom of Cornovaglia there is no knight bold enough to stand against Amoroldo for all the gold in the world. Not a single knight, not even thirty, could stand in battle against him alone, because Amoroldo is one of the noblest knights in the world,

a knight errant who, through his prowess, is of the company of the knights of the Tavola Ritonda."

Tristano said, "Since God has made you so cowardly you won't defend your own rights, you will have to find justice in paying." And he said no more until he went to find Governale. Then he said, "My teacher, as you see, Amoroldo of Irlanda is demanding tribute from King Marco, and I am told he has no right to it except through his great power and courage, and the king and his barons, through cowardice, are prepared to pay. I have heard that a single knight might contest it, so I have decided that I want to be knighted, and I want to contest that tribute, not for love of the cowardly people of this kingdom, but for the sake of my family name."

Governale replied, "My Tristano, how could you stand against Amoroldo, one of the best knights in the world, when you are just a boy?"

Tristano answered, "Governale, if Amoroldo is a bold knight, I wish he were still bolder, for if I should be the winner of the battle it would be a greater honor in my life than if he were an ordinary knight. In this first battle I will find out if I am worth anything at arms, and if I cannot be worthy, it is better to die fighting against a noble knight than to live in cowardice."

Then Governale said, "My son, since you want to become a knight and prove yourself, I am satisfied."

At that, Tristano went before King Marco, saying, "Sire, I have been in your court as you know, but it is not for the service I've done you that I ask a boon; rather, I ask only through your own courtesy that you will make me a knight."

The king said, "My son, I had rather put you off, since we are not now at a time for celebration. Still, since I know your desire, I will make you a knight."

And all that night Tristano kept vigil in the great church, as the custom was, and prayed that God might give him the grace to carry his knighthood with justice, loyalty, and prowess. Many knights and barons watched with him, and when morning came Tristano went to the great piazza of the city, where the king bathed him. Here Tristano took the name and vow of knighthood, that is, he promised to be brave, bold, and sure, loyal, courteous, and just; to defend the weak against those who would treat them unjustly; to renounce all goods and artifices, or any activities for worldly gain. He swore an oath to this and took the sacraments, just as all new knights did. Then the king girded him with a sword[15] and struck him on both cheeks, praying that God would give him ardor, prowess, and courtesy so that he would live according to right, with courtesy and justice, defending right from wrong.

XVIII.

The true story tells that it was three days after Tristano was made a knight that the ambassadors returned to court, saying to King Marco, "Are you ready to pay the tribute? Don't you realize how close the deadline is?"

The king did not answer these words; instead he was crying loudly, and none of the barons answered because the tribute they had to pay was so great. Sir Tristano, seeing that none of the barons was answering, got to his feet and said to the ambassadors, "If our fathers paid tribute to Irlanda, they did not do it justly, but rather they paid out of fear, because they were forced to. Thus, since Amoroldo is demanding tribute on the basis of his power rather than of any right he has to it, we do not wish to pay it, nor to observe the ancient law of tyrants who ruled the world through force and power. We would rather observe the law of God which rules not through force but through justice and right, not through war and rapine, wrongly binding people and countries.

"And if Amoroldo says otherwise, I summon him to battle and will show him by force of arms that he deserves no tribute from us, but rather that the tribute he had in the past ought to be returned and restored to us."

The ambassadors said, "Sire, does this boy speak with your good will?"

The king said, "Yes, certainly."

The ambassadors turned to Tristano, saying, "Knight, who are you that you seek to battle with Amoroldo? He will fight with none but well-born knights."

Then Tristano said, "My lords, know that the battle cannot be avoided this way. If he is a knight, I am a knight; if he is a king's son, so am I. King Meliadus was my father."

At that, the ambassadors returned to Amoroldo and told him the message, how a new knight wanted to contest the tribute in battle. Amoroldo said, "If he is a new knight, I will make him newly dead. And because I gladly accept the challenge, present him this sword on my behalf; it is the best in the world. It first belonged to the Grand Tartar, and I won it on a distant island when I slew the great giant Tarturiale, who wore it by his side. Tell him I present it to him for love of his ardor, for I did not think in this kingdom of cowards there might be a man who would trouble himself to fight. Tell him our battle can be whenever he pleases."

But know that Amoroldo really sent Tristano that sword because it was too heavy, telling himself, "The knight is so young, he will not be able to wield it (and in this he thought wisely); however, it will seem heavier with heavy armor than when he is unarmed."

Then the two ambassadors returned to Tristano and as part of their em-

bassy presented him with the sword. Tristano received it gladly because it would be of compelling heaviness against strength and greatness. Tristano said to the ambassadors that it seemed best to him that the battle be on the island of Sanza Avventura. "If I lose, King Marco will redouble his tribute, and I will give Amoroldo the kingdom of Liones, and if Amoroldo loses, he will renounce the tribute and all other claims he may have on this realm. And give him this sword from me, which belonged to King Meliadus, my father, and this dog which belonged to King Ferramonte, and was given to me by his daughter Bellices."

The ambassadors went back to Amoroldo and gave him the message. Then Amoroldo had himself armed and his good warhorse also, as his custom was, and he got into a small boat and went alone to the island of Sanza Avventura. Tristano also armed himself to great advantage and King Marco went with him to the shore, saying, "Dear and lovely nephew, I would like to cancel this battle, because I would rather lose all the gold I have in this kingdom than lose you!"

Tristano did not reply to this, but instead got into a little boat and went to the island. When he disembarked, he gave his boat a strong push and sent it out into the water. When he met Amoroldo, he greeted him courteously. Amoroldo returned his greeting and said, "Tell me, knight, why have you pushed your boat out in the water?"

"Because I am sure that one of us will die on this island, and whoever of the two of us survives can go back in the boat I see tied over there."

Amoroldo then said to Tristano, "I see, knight, that you are very young, and I am sure that you are not very wise, having come to this island to die. If you knew me, you would not do battle with me for all the gold in the world."

Tristano said, "Amoroldo, I know you are brave and bold. I have seen you armed and I have seen you disarmed, and I served before you at the table at King Ferramonte's court, when you dismounted there and ate."

At that, Amoroldo realized that this was the boy the fool had warned him about. Then he felt doubtful, and said, "Knight, I will excuse you from this battle because I am sure you have undertaken it foolishly, and it would not be much honor for me to demonstrate my power against you."

Tristano answered, "If you will renounce your claim to the tribute you are demanding from King Marco, I would gladly give up this battle, but I will not leave it for any other reason."

Amoroldo said to Tristano, "I said what I said out of pity for you because you are so young. I do not intend to renounce my claim to the tribute."

Tristano said, "My lord, many thanks for taking pity on my youth. I wish your conscience would also move you not to demand tribute from King Marco, since you demand it unjustly."

Amoroldo said to Tristano, "Such words mean nothing to me. The good point of my sword will decide right and wrong."

Know, my lords, that Amoroldo was right; in this he prophesied and spoke the truth, because the point of the sword was to remain in his head, as you will hear, and because of that he had to renounce the tribute.

At once, then, the two knights challenged each other, and rode apart from each other the length of an arrow's flight, riding to strike with their lances in hand so they seemed as fierce as lions, and when they lowered the lances they struck so vigorously that the shafts were shattered and their horses sat down on the ground. Still the knights did not lose their stirrups. Then they struck their good destriers with spurs and forced them up again. They took their iron maces in hand, and there began between them a cruel and bitter battle, as they traded such great blows that their helmets rang on their heads. They shattered each other's shields one after the other, right off their arms. When they had fought for a long time they rested from the first assault.

During the second, they took their swords in hand and began to cut the armor off each other's backs so that most of it soon lay scattered over the ground. Fighting in this way, in the third assault each one wounded the other very much, and their flesh was nearly bare, colored by blood and sweat. In the fourth assault, their horses could no longer stand, and each of them marvelled at the strength of the other, for each one still struck vigorously and well.

Amoroldo, with great skill, struck Tristano such a blow on his helmet that it made him bow down. Then he said, "Tristano, Tristano, how is your head? I'll make you know my sword is greater than yours!"

Then Tristano, full of vigor in spite of that blow on his head, was filled with desire to pay it back. He gripped his sword angrily and struck Amoroldo's helmet with all his power and strength. So great, so true, and so strong was the blow, that it cut deep into his helmet, through the iron cap, and landed in his head. At the impact of the blow the sword broke off near the point, so that a sliver of the blade was lodged in Amoroldo's brain; and from the force of the heavy blow Amoroldo was stretched out on the ground, crying to Tristano for mercy, begging him not to kill him, and conceding him the victory. He renounced all tribute he could ever demand from King Marco, whether he had a right to it or not.

Then Tristano, like a noble knight, for courtesy's sake pardoned him and did not kill him. He took him and put him into his boat and pushed it out into the water as far as he could, to send him back to his people. But Amoroldo, like a shameful knight, took a Syrian bow which he had in the boat and shot a poisoned arrow, wounding Tristano in the right thigh. Then he returned to his people, broke camp, and went home.

When Queen Lotta, his sister, saw how he was wounded, she was very troubled. She treated him, for she was the best physician in the world, and no one ever treated died when his doctor was Queen Lotta. And she managed, after fifteen days, to get the point of the sword out of her brother's

skull, but still Amoroldo could not escape, for in the end he died of it.

There remained to him a little son, to whom King Languis of Irlanda, the husband of Queen Lotta, gave the name of Amoroldino Novello, in remembrance of the good Amoroldo.

XIX.

The true story tells that since Tristano remained on the island King Marco got into a boat with a great many barons and knights and sailed out to him with the greatest joy in the world, and brought him back to the city. All who saw him thought themselves blessed, because he had delivered them from such weakness and servitude.

But Tristano suffered greatly from the wound in his thigh, and day and night could find neither rest nor repose. King Marco called in the best and worthiest doctors in the entire country, but none of them knew how to cure it or give advice about it. The more they treated it the worse Tristano grew, because the arrow was poisoned, and the wound grew so putrid that no one could bear to be near him.

For greater ease, Tristano had himself carried to the great palace of Riano, outside the city on the sea shore. Here he lived for two months, in constant pain. He took his harp with him, and other instruments for his delight, but to no avail. His pain was so great that many times he would have thrown himself into the sea if Governale had not guarded him so well. After Tristano had been for some time in such travail, he said to King Marco, "Since I can find no help in this kingdom, I have decided to seek my cure throughout the world. Therefore, my lord, I ask your leave to go."

The king, seeing his strong desire, said that he was satisfied to have him leave. Then Tristano had a ship made, all painted and decorated, furnishing it with gold and silver and all things necessary and good for a year's travelling. He had his sword put in, and his harp, and other instruments of delight, then he himself boarded with Governale and other good sailors in whom he had great confidence. The weather was clear, good for navigating, so that in a very short time they were on the high seas. The good weather held for eight days, but on the ninth there arose a great and dangerous storm with winds contrary to the prow, so they were all in danger of being killed. They endured that storm and its uncertainty for ten days.

The master sailors were very frightened, seeing themselves so close to death.

They gave themselves up to God, and let the wind blow them this way and that as it would, so great was their fear; thus fortune led their ship in such a way that they all thought they would die. After going thus all day, when midnight came they found themselves on dry land, at the foot of a rich castle. The sailors were very glad of it. They dropped anchor, secured the rudder, and furled the sails, then took oars and rowed the ship to the shore.

XX.

Now, if anyone should ask me where Tristano had come, I would say that he had arrived in the country of Irlanda, at the gate of the winter castle of King Languis, brother-in-law of Amoroldo, whom Tristano had killed; the castle was some two leagues outside of the city of Londres. When the day-star had risen and dawn began to appear Sir Tristano, as he always did for comfort of his pain, took up his harp and began to play it. So sweetly he played that it was a great delight to hear. When King Languis heard the music, he got out of bed, put on a silken tunic, and went out on his balcony to listen. After Tristano had played, the young knight gave a great sigh, saying, "Alas, lord God, why must I die like this?" And he wept bitterly.

The king, having heard the music and then those words, summoned four squires, taking them with him down to the shore. He saw how Tristano was lying in a rich bed, near death. The king greeted him courteously and asked why he lamented so; then Tristano answered that he was a knight from a land far away, and that he had been wounded in the thigh and could find no cure. The king asked him to the castle, and Tristano said it would please him to come. Then the king had his four squires lift him and place him in a silken litter and carry him to the palace, where he was laid in a rich bed inside a lovely chamber. Still, no one knew who he was except his own people.

Now know that King Languis called one of his daughters, who was called Isotta the Blonde. At that time she was twelve years old, and was already counted among the most beautiful women in the world, one of the three then found: one was Queen Ginevara of Bretagna, the second was Queen Albagia of Organia, and the third, flower of them all, was Isotta the Blonde: of all that was beautiful and sweet, she was the best.

When Isotta came before the king her father, he said to her, "My daughter, here is a knight from a distant country who is terribly wounded, and in

his journeying has found no help nor remedy to cure him. Therefore I beg you, my lovely daughter, that you take him into your care; I ask you to do this for my sake."

Isotta then answered him, "My father, I will do it gladly."

If anyone wants to know why King Languis did not give Tristano into the care of Queen Lotta, his wife, who was the wisest doctor in the world, I will say that from the day that Amoroldo her brother died, she did not want to treat patients any more because of the great sorrow she felt from having treated him and not cured him; because of this she no longer would be involved in healing. She said, "Since I could not save my own brother, it would not please God that I help or cure anyone else." For this reason, her daughter Isotta now did all the doctoring.

The story says that when Isotta looked at Tristano's wound, she saw how it was poisoned, and treated it in new ways. She did so much with her good medicine that in thirty days Tristano was almost well. One day she said to him, "Knight, do you have the heart to leap?"

When Tristano said he did, she told him to try. He lept twenty- two feet, but the wound reopened. Then Isotta treated it some more, and did not ask him to test it until she was certain it was well healed. When she did, he lept thirty feet, and Isotta said, "Knight, now you are well." Still, neither his strength nor his good color had yet returned, his suffering had been so serious and had lasted so long.

XXI.

Now says the tale that the country of Irlanda had the custom of holding many tournaments and fine jousts. At that point, the King of Scozia had one proclaimed, saying that on the feast of the Annunciation every knight who wanted to demonstrate his prowess and strength for love of a lady or maiden should come to the assembly to be held before the castle at Monte Soave, on the broad and lovely meadow. When that time came, King Languis said to Tristano, "Knight, do you want to come to the assembly that the King of Scozia has called against the King of a Hundred Knights?"

"I would be very glad to," said Tristano, "but I don't yet feel strong enough to wear armor."

Then the king said, "By my faith, I would not want you to bear arms. I myself am going to watch; in the morning, if you like, we will ride over together." Tristano said that he was ready to go.

When the next day came, the king and Sir Tristano, with many other barons and knights, mounted and went toward the place where the tournament was to be held. They rode that day and the next, coming to the castle of Monte Soave; here they met Sir Calvano, King Artù's nephew, and ten more knights errant. Tristano also saw here the squire who had presented him with the horse on Bellice's behalf. The king greeted the knights errant with great honor. In the morning Tristano went with many others to have Bellice's squire dubbed a knight; he was given arms and a horse, and the name Amadore the Well-behaved.

After that, all the knights mounted and gathered that day at the place where the tournament was to be. Here they found on one side the King of Scozia and all the knights of his realm, and on the other, the King of a Hundred Knights, with all his barons and a good dozen knights errant. As soon as all the people had gathered, the King of Scozia had trumpets and horns sounded once, then twice, and at the third blast all the knights began to fight at once. The battle was heavy and strong, lasting the greater part of the day; many knights were wounded or killed. And on one side, the King of a Hundred Knights fought so that with help from the good knights errant, he was the winner.

But at that point, right after noon, there entered on the side of the King of Scozia a knight who bore all black insignia, and who was called Palamidesso the Pagan, son of King Scalabrino. This Palamidesso carried two swords by his side as a signal that no knight had ever made him bend over the saddlebow. He began to fight against the people of the King of a Hundred Knights, striking barons, knights, and horses; when his lance broke he took a sword in hand, dealing blows so heavy and strong that no one could stand before him. In a short time he had conquered the field and scattered the King of a Hundred Knights and all his people. King Languis felt sorrow and anger because of it, and he felt offended himself, because he was always against the King of Scozia.

All the people shouted, "The knight of the black banner has won the tournament!" At that the King of a Hundred Knights, hoping to vindicate himself, had another tournament proclaimed, saying it would be on Easter Day, and that each king, duke, count, baron, and knight should gather to compete in a tournament on the great field of Fregolo, in front of the castle of the Enchantresses, each to prove himself for love of his lady or the maiden he loves. After the proclamation, each knight left and returned to his own country.

King Languis waited for Palamidesso, and when he caught up with him, Languis invited him warmly to come and rest with him at the castle of Irlanda, near the city of Londres, and Palamidesso accepted the invitation. They rode until they reached the castle, and coming into the palace they disarmed and rested. After a little, the tables were brought, and when they sat down

to eat, the lovely maid Isotta served before the king her father.

Palamidesso, seeing the lovely girl, so graceful and adorned, fell in love with her at once, and could not stop gazing at her. When Tristano noticed that he was staring at her, he began to do it himself, just to annoy Palamidesso. Palamidesso, noticing Tristano's gaze, felt very sad, and began to hate Tristano very, very much. Tristano began to hate him, too, so that each of them would gladly have killed the other. At that began the hatred between them so great that from then on they were mortal enemies.

Each one was a young knight, except that Palamidesso was a little older than Tristano; and they would both die on the same day, according to what I have read.

The two young knights exchanged so many spiteful looks that Isotta's lady in waiting, Brandina, noticed them, and said secretly to Isotta, "If God blessed you, and you could choose, which knight would you prefer, the one you cured, or him of the black banner?"

Isotta answered, "If our knight is as bold as he seems to be, I would prefer him, but if he is not as brave as he is handsome, I would want the other."

When Palamidesso had been at court for a few days, he took leave, mounted, and went on his way, because the time of the next tournament was approaching. King Languis summoned all his barons and knights to enter the tournament against the King of Scozia. He said to Tristano, "Knight, do you want to go to this assembly?"

And Tristano, because he wanted to go more secretly, said, "I cannot yet bear arms."

"Then stay behind," said the king. And at that point he armed himself and had all his people armed and mounted. He took Isotta with him, because it delighted him to see her there before him and she loved to watch the men at arms. They rode until they came to the place where the tournament was to be, and they found on one side the King of Scozia with all the knights of Longres, and on the other, the King of a Hundred Knights with all the knights of Guzilagne. King Languis entered the lists on the side of the King of a Hundred Knights. When the two sides were lined up, the horns were sounded and all the barons began to strike, one side against the other. The King of a Hundred Knights overcame the King of Scozia, and Palamidesso beat King Languis. They broke their lances and put their hands to their swords: the battle was so dangerous it was a marvel to see, for there were more than 7500 knights there, counting both sides. But the bold Palamidesso, who fought for the King of Scozia, did such deeds of arms it was impossible to see them all. Relentlessly he chased the King of a Hundred Knights over the field, and King Languis, and the knights errant and their forces, so great were his prowess and the fierce, fine deeds he did.

XXII.

The masters of stories tell that Tristano, staying behind at the court of King Languis, was very thoughtful, wondering how he might get to that tournament. Brandina, noticing how worried he was, said to him, "Tell me, why are you so thoughtful? For courtesy's sake, let me know."

Tristano said, "Lady, by my faith, I will tell you the truth. I have a great desire to go to this tournament, if I had but a horse, and a squire to keep me company who might guide me to the place of assembly."

At that, Brandina took Tristano by the hand and led him into a room where many handsome arms were hung, saying to him, "Knight, choose whichever arms please you the most, the ones that seem best to you."

Then Tristano chose white armor and a white banner, and armed himself to great advantage. Brandina had a good horse made ready for him, and lent him her own two brothers to bear him company. Then Tristano and Governale and the two squires rode to the tournament, arriving just as Palamidesso was getting the best of everyone on the field.

Tristano entered the lists on the side of the King of a Hundred Knights, who was losing badly. The young knight set his lance and began to do such deeds of arms that all the people who saw him marvelled. Before his lance was broken, he had knocked eleven knights off their horses, and with his last blow he sent Sir Palamidesso to earth, horse and all. Then he drew his sword and began to deal such great blows that no one had the courage to face him or the will to wait for him, for if they stood against him they were quickly knocked down. Thus he overcame the King of Scozia and all the knights of Inghilterra, and with his own hand put to death more than twenty-five knights. All the people cried out, "The knight of the white banner has won the tournament."

As Tristano looked over the field, he saw that Sir Palamidesso was leaving, and called out to him, "Hallo, knight, guard yourself against me! I am the knight you met at King Languis' court, and it seems now that I am the worthier of the love of Isotta the Blonde!"

Bold Palamidesso, hearing those words, turned his horse's head around and, drawing his sword, gave Tristano such blows on his helmet that he bent him over the saddlebow. But Tristano hit back, and hit Palamidesso so hard on his helmet that he made blood gush out of his mouth and nose, and knocked him off his horse so badly wounded that for a long time he was unconscious. Thus Palamidesso lost the prize, and lost also the right to wear two swords.

Thus Tristano won the tournament against the King of Scozia. Afterwards he left very secretly and went back to the castle of Irlanda, and all the kings,

barons, and knights went home to their own countries. And they all went asking and wondering who the knight of the white banner could be, who had done such deeds of arms.

When King Languis returned, Tristano went to meet him since he was there before him, asking for news, and asking which side had won the tournament. The king said, "God the Father sent to fight on our side a heavenly knight all dressed in white, who did such deeds of arms that no other knight could do half as much in a day's time; it was he who truly vindicated our late shame and outrage, and all in all, he was the winner of the tournament. Afterwards, he left so secretly that no one could find out anything about him and this is one of the greatest sorrows and causes of grief that we have, not being able to find out who that knight was who did such noble deeds."

While they spoke, the king and the other barons looked hard at Tristano, because he had many cuts and scratches he could not hide; even though his face showed nothing, elsewhere he had had many blows. The king noticed it, and said to Tristano, "Sir, were you at the assembly for this tournament, where such a noble battle was fought?"

But Tristano said, "Sire, I was here. I was not prepared to go to any tournament."

When the king had rested a little, the tables were brought, and water to wash their hands, and they went in to eat, the king continually saying, "By my faith, I would give one of my rich castles to know the name and origin of that knight who won the tournament, and did such deeds of arms."

After the tables were taken away, Brandina presented herself before the king and, taking him by the hand, said, "Noble sire, do you want so very much to know who the knight of the white banner was who won the tournament?"

And the king answered, "Brandina, I have never wanted anything as badly as I want this."

Then Brandina said, "Noble sire, know certainly that the knight who won the battle for the King of a Hundred Knights and who beat Palamidesso two times was our knight, the one you gave to Isotta to cure."

The king said, "Brandina, how can this be?"

Then Brandina showed him the white banner, and the good horse wounded in two places, and her brothers told him everything that had happened. Then the king had all his great barons summoned to the castle, and all the noble ladies and maidens, then he had Tristano called, and had stand before him the one who, of three, was among the handsomest in the world. When all the people were assembled, the king got to his feet and said to Tristano, "Knight, I marvel much that you have been at my court so long, and still I do not know where you are from; therefore I ask that you tell me your name."

Tristano, hearing these words, was very troubled, for it would not do for

him to be known here. He said to the king, "My lord King Languis, I beg you for courtesy's sake that you will pardon me from revealing my lineage now, for the credit of my name I hold my greatest treasure. Call me by this name—'The Distant Knight'—because I come from a land far away."

The king answered, "I will desist for now from wanting to know your origin and where you come from and your name, if you will tell me just one thing. For the love which I showed you when I gave you into the care of my daughter, tell me whether you are that knight who routed the King of Scozia and overcame Palamidesso the Pagan."

Tristano, seeing how gently he asked it, thought it would be a great villainy to lie. He said, "Know that I am the knight who did those deeds you have asked me about. I am sure that it is a great villainy to boast, but my debt to you has made me speak that which I would have kept to myself."

Then the king embraced him and kissed him, and all the other people did him great honor, and held themselves fortunate if they could be with him or serve him.

XXIII.

The true story tells that as Tristano was staying thus in the court of King Languis, having returned from the tournament with the King of Scozia, he had a bath prepared, because he was sore from the buffets he had taken, and from the long exertion. There he was well attended by squires and other people, who greatly honored him. On the third day he went again to bathe, and it happened that he left the door of his chamber open through carelessness and left his sword lying on the bed where he slept. This sword was heavily gilded, and nobly adorned with silverwork and many precious stones. At that point a squire, finding the room open, came in. When he saw the sword on the bed, he picked it up to look at it, because it was so beautiful. Meanwhile, Queen Lotta was passing by and saw that the squire was holding Tristano's sword. She came up to him and took it in her hands, pulling it out of its sheath

and saying, "Here is the noblest and most beautiful sword anyone has ever seen."

She pulled it all the way out and, looking at the end of it, saw that the tip was blunted. She wondered at that, then suddenly remembered the point of a sword she had drawn from the head of Amoroldo, her brother. She went to her chamber and took that point out of the jewel box where she kept it, and found that it fitted exactly onto the end of Tristano's sword. Thus she was sure that this was the knight who had killed her brother. She ran at once into the bath with that sword in her hand, crying, "Alas, you false traitor, you nephew of King Marco of Cornovaglia, now you can conceal yourself no longer, for we are certain that you are the false traitor who treacherously killed Amoroldo! Now it is necessary that you die by my hand!"

She would have struck him, had it not been that those who were there prevented her, and Tristano did not flinch, because he did not believe that a woman's blow had the power to do him harm. But the great uproar the queen was making brought King Languis and many barons, and the queen, when she saw the king, said, "My lord king, you see before you Tristano, the nephew of King Marco of Cornovaglia, who killed Amoroldo, my brother, through great treachery!"

The king said, "Lady, don't cry and don't give yourself so much trouble. Leave this vendetta to me, for it is not right that a woman should concern herself with such things." Then he turned to Tristano, saying, "Sir, are you this Tristano who is of such great fame throughout the world?"

Tristano replied, "Sire, some people do speak of me that way."

The king said, "Sir, then dress yourself at once. And you, knights, stay with him and bring him to the palace."

Then Tristano got out of the bath and dressed himself in a silken tunic and put a mantle of camel's hair over his shoulders; the beautiful Isotta refastened his sword. When Tristano stood before the king, it seemed to all the people a great sin to kill such a noble knight in such a way.

The queen came before the king like a madwoman, crying, "Sire, I beg you for the love you bore to Amoroldo, my brother, that you take vengeance on this false traitor!"

The king said, "Lady, go on your way. I will do what is right, and your shame will be nobly vindicated." Then he spoke to Tristano and said, "Sir, did you kill Amoroldo treacherously?"

Then Sir Tristano answered King Languis, saying, "Sire, it is true that I killed him, though not through treachery, for I have never been a traitor, and may it please God that I never will be. I killed him as one knight does another, in a fair fight ordained between the two of us. If there is anyone eager to say that I killed him treacherously, him I call to the field of battle, where I will show him through strength and the power of arms how I killed him in a fair encounter arranged between the two of us. I will show anyone

who wishes it that never have I been a traitor or done any treacherous deed."

The king, seeing what a young and fine-looking knight he was, thought a little and said, "Tristano, did you already have at this time enough strength to kill Amoroldo, the best knight in the world?"

And Tristano answered, "Sire, it is not right for me to vaunt myself, but the deed could be told by more than five hundred knights of this country who were there and who saw all that happened. They could tell the whole truth, whatever is needed."

Now it was quite clear to the king, and he knew well what had happened in that battle and how it had ended; but still he would gladly have found a reason to cut off Tristano's head to satisfy the queen, his wife. All the people thought it was very unfair to Tristano, for they saw that, right or wrong, the king was going to pass judgement on him.

Know that the noble maiden Isotta had been standing near the king as he examined Tristano, and that she was very worried and sad about what was happening. She knew well that Amoroldo had not been wounded or killed through treachery, because she had heard him say, when the queen was treating him, that he had never met a truer or a nobler knight, nor a more courteous fighter than the one he had faced in the battle that caused his death. Thus it seemed to the beautiful Isotta a great evil and injustice that Tristano should die as though he had done wrong. When she saw what a handsome, gifted young knight he was, and when she thought how she had treated and cured him and saved his life, she almost thought of him as her own knight. Because of all this, she could no longer keep quiet, but got to her feet and said, "My father, I have never asked a boon of you or anyone, but now I beg one of you. I pray that since this is my first, you will not deny me, but will grant it generously."

The king said, "Then ask, my daughter, and all will be as you please, for I am ready to do it"; he believed that Isotta would side with the queen, and want Tristano killed.

Then spoke the merciful blond Isotta: "My father," she said, "I pray you by the one God, and for your honor's sake, do not make your kindness and magnanimity the price of what you do here, as you will if you depart from reason and justice. For until now, no one in the world could say of you that you ever falsified justice. And if you remember, you are king, and a king is none other than the shield, lance, and helmet, that is, leader, guide, and protector of true justice, defender of the truth, so that if you have Tristano killed, today you will lose all the great honor you have earned over so long a time. For, my father, to falsify justice and to act against your own conscience is a fault that water won't wash nor a cloak cover.

"Know certainly, if you do not already know it, that Tristano did not kill Amoroldo treacherously, for Amoroldo himself and all his barons said that it was a battle well and truly proclaimed between them on both sides. Now,

if Amoroldo lost in such a battle and was killed, should Tristano be held a traitor for that? And if you do not believe that he was strong enough, and if you think his age forbids it, you must know that it was a bigger thing by a hundred times that he overcame Palamidesso and routed the King of Scozia than that he put Amoroldo to death. So now I ask of you the boon you promised me. I ask you, my father, to give me this Tristano, and that nothing bad be done to him."

At that, the king turned to Sir Tristano, saying to him, "Knight, the truth is that to vindicate my shame and to satisfy my lady, I would bring justice against you, but now I remember myself, and I will not seek vengeance against you. The first reason is that when you came to my court you were nearly dead, and through me and through my daughter you were cured, so that it seems to me a great cruelty to have brought the dead back to life and afterwards to lead him back to death in such a way. The second cause is that I do not want to be the one to put an end to the beauty and prowess of the world. And the third reason that I pardon you all offenses and offer you peace is for love of my daughter, Isotta the Blonde; truly it is from her that you have your life. From now on, you can be free to go or stay or come, healthy and safe, at your pleasure and however you like."

Then Tristano thanked the king and gave many thanks to the lovely Isotta the Blonde.

XXIV.

Then the story goes on to say that Tristano had Governale order a ship all prepared, because he wanted to leave and go back to Cornovaglia. Isotta gave Tristano back his sword, and he thanked her very courteously for the service she had done him. They took leave of each other with many sighs, for they loved each other with a loyal love.

Tristano went aboard the ship, taking Brandina's two brothers with him. The weather was so good that in a little time they were well out to sea, that is, on the high seas. They went with the wind as their guide, so that when the weather began to change they did not arrive where they had wanted to, but instead ended up in the kingdom of Liones. Tristano and his companions disembarked and had their horses led out so they could ride through that country.

There Tristano was shown the castle of Bridoa, where lived the lords of those knights who had killed King Meliadus, his father. When Tristano came

to the castle he demanded a joust, as it was the custom to do in those times, and there came against him one of his mortal enemies, the one who was the leader of those who had put his father to death. Confronting each other, they called out their challenges and began to strike; the knight, who was called Sir Magano, struck Tristano such a great blow on the shield that he shattered his lance, but he did Tristano no harm, then Tristano struck him with such skill that he knocked him flat on the ground from his horse. Then he beat the second, and the third until of the eight, he had beaten five, and the others did not want to joust.

At that point, Tristano unsheathed his sword, as did the good Governale and the two squires, and they went toward the gate, entering the castle by force, putting whomever they found to the sword. Then he took the five mortal enemies he had beaten, and put them, well armed, into a single room. All alone he went in among them, his good sword in hand, saying, "Defend yourselves against me, knights, for I am that Tristano, son of King Meliadus whom you killed. Know now that you have reached the place where, God willing, I will take great vengeance for this. Defend yourself, for there is no other way to escape me, that is sure!"

Seeing themselves in such a situation, they struck out against Sir Tristano, and did so well that they wounded him in two places; and Tristano, who was a bold fighter, grew so angry against these traitors for the way they had attacked him that he cut them to pieces with his true sword, all except one, the youngest of the five. This one cried to Tristano for mercy and pardon and Tristano, a merciful man, granted him his life. But afterwards he made everyone leave the castle, and had it set afire and burned to the ground.

Then he rode on toward his own city of Liones, where he was received with feasts and great celebrations. He found out that the queen, his stepmother, had passed from this life. While he was there he made the young man he had pardoned a knight and gave him a rich castle, and he knighted Brandina's two brothers and gave them the lordship and revenues of the country for five years.

He and Governale then returned to Cornovaglia, to the city of Tintoile, and King Marco, when he saw them, received them with great honor, and all the people of the land showed great joy and happiness at Tristano's return. Then King Marco made a decree that all the knights and barons of the city and the castle, with their ladies and maidens, should come to the great palace to celebrate their happiness at the return of Tristano, their lord and defender.

Then to the palace came all the barons, knights, and ladies of high degree, and among them came one who was called the Hebrew damsel of Aigua della Spina, a maiden whom King Marco loved very much. She was included, for her beauty, among other ladies of worth: she was ranked with the lady Losanna of the Old Court, and with the damsel Isotta of the White Hands; the third of these was this Jewess.

XXV.

All the barons and high-born ladies of Cornovaglia gathered at the great palace to celebrate Sir Tristano's return. Enough tables were brought so that everyone could eat, and the ladies' tables were in front of the knights'. Among the ladies sat the Hebrew maiden of Aigua della Spina, and as they ate she looked at the side of the men's table where Tristano was. Seeing him there so handsome and so young, she fell madly in love with him, and could not stop staring. Soon Tristano felt her gaze, and soon returned it, so that it was plain to both how much they desired each other. Getting up from the table, the maiden went to Tristano's side, saying, "Knight, I am she who loves you most with all my heart."

Tristano replied, "You show great mercy, lady, when you deign to say so. Know that I am your loving knight."

With that, they took leave of each other and the lady rode back to her dwelling. When she was in bed she summoned a dwarf of hers in whom she had great trust and said to him, "I want you to carry a message from me to Sir Tristano. Tell him prudently for me that he is to come to me this evening at my palace, here in the middle of the Garden of Aigua della Spina, and tell him to come armed, because he cannot tell what adventure he may meet."

The dwarf replied, "Lady, I will do it at once and willingly." He mounted immediately and rode to the court of King Marco; there he found Sir Tristano. The dwarf called him aside and delivered his message, which made Tristano very glad, and the young knight replied that he was ready to go at the appointed time. But know that when the dwarf was speaking with Tristano, King Marco became aware of it, and at once realized that the maiden had sent for him. He had the dwarf brought into his chamber and said to him, "Look here, I want you to tell me what message you delivered to Tristano."

The dwarf replied, "It would not be courteous to reveal the secret entrusted to me."

"What?" said the king. "I marvel greatly at you. You will not tell me what I ask of you?" The dwarf said no, then the king said, "Then I will have you beheaded." Then the dwarf was afraid, and out of fear told King Marco what had happened.

The king said, "I have often paid court to your lady, dwarf, and from her I have had not even one good reply. Because of this, I see she is a lady of little worth who will always choose the worst, who refuses me, the king, and chooses Tristano, who is worth nothing. I will surely have her put to death."

The dwarf replied, "It would not be just for you to punish my lady because

of these things, for you know it happens every day that a great baron desires a poor lady, or a great queen loves an unproved knight. You ought to know that love pays no attention to riches or beauty, but rather enters where pleasure carries it. And since love is the greatest of man's worldly treasures, the one who loves needs no other riches. Therefore my lady ought not to be found guilty."

Then the king said, "Dwarf, you know well how to arrange it that I have your lady for my pleasure, if you will, and she will receive from me no bad reward. And so do this: ride with Tristano, and I will arm myself and ride alone until I am ahead of you. When we meet, I will challenge Tristano, and if I win, you will take me to your lady."

The dwarf agreed, and secretly the king armed himself, mounted, and went on his way. When evening came, Tristano armed himself, and he and the dwarf rode toward the palace of Aigua della Spina. When they came to a pass, the king confronted and challenged Tristano, saying, "Knight, guard yourself against me!"

Tristano, who did not recognize him, lowered his lance, and the two struck each other with such force that each one pierced the other's shield and breastplate. The king wounded Tristano slightly, but not enough to move him in his saddle, while Tristano knocked the king off his horse badly wounded, so that he had to ride back to Tintoile in great pain.

When Tristano reached the palace, he dismounted and treated and bandaged his wounds, then coming to her chamber he found that the damsel was already in bed. It was the time of first sleep. Tristano got into bed with her, and together they took solace and gave each other pleasure and delight.

It is true that the damsel had taken a husband just sixteen days before, but they had not yet consummated their marriage. It was the custom at that time that when a knight took a wife they waited thirty days before consummation, hearing mass together each day so that God might pardon their sins and forgive them the loss of their virginity and their coming to carnal knowledge. And they prayed that their children might be noble in the world, gracious to all people, and blessed by God, and that they themselves would be faithful in marriage.

Tristano was in the midst of great delight when the dwarf came to the door and called out to him, "Get up! Here comes my lord Lambergus, coming back from the castle of Girano!"

This news made Tristano very unhappy, but at once he armed himself and mounted, took leave and went on his way. Soon the lady's husband arrived, and went into her room. Looking at the floor, he saw that it was covered with blood from Tristano's wound. The knight asked what blood this was, and the lady answered, "It is blood from my nose."

The knight said, "Maiden, tell me the truth. This blood came from some other place than your nose."

Then she was afraid, and told him the truth, that Tristano the nephew of King Marco had been there. Then Lambergus, greatly outraged, mounted and rode after Tristano. Meeting him by the moon's light, he called out, "I defy you!" At that, they struck each other with great vigor, wounding each other, but Tristano beat the knight and rode on his way. When he came to Tintoile he went to his own palace, which was named Luogo Franco, because within ten paces of it the king could have no one seized; also here no one ever lacked bread or wine, and here someone could always be found ready to fence or joust, or to read lovely stories of Rome or Troy. When Tristano got home, he had his wounds treated, and soon the king sent for him, asking, "My dear nephew, how are you?"

Tristano replied, "I am better than someone wanted me to be."

The king asked, "Do you know who wounded you?"

"I think I know very well," said Tristano, "and I will take high revenge for it."

Tristano meant the maiden's husband, but King Marco thought these words were intended for him, and meant him. He became very suspicious, and worried a lot about Tristano, believing that he had found out who had jousted with him, but Tristano, in truth, did not know.

When Tristano was cured, and after a few days, the king had two pavilions of fine silk set up on the shore, and commanded that every baron come with his lady to chase melancholy away. Many barons, knights, and ladies came, among them the lady of Aigua della Spina and her husband, and King Marco and Tristano rode over afterwards.

As they rode past a great snowdrift, Tristano looked down and saw three drops of blood that had fallen from a bird Adriette had wounded. He stopped and began to gaze intently at this blood on the snow, for the color gave him much pleasure, the bit of vermilion on the white. The king asked what he was thinking about, and he replied, "Surely, sire, these are the very colors of Isotta's face, Isotta who is the beautiful daughter of King Languis of Irlanda, who saved me from an evil death."

Then they joined the knights and ladies who were amusing themselves by the sea, eating and dancing and playing chess, and giving each other great pleasure and solace. As they played thus, there arrived among them a knight errant, who was called Sir Brunoro, and when he saw the damsel of Aigua della Spina, he fell madly in love with her. He went before the king and craved a boon of him, which the king granted gladly, not knowing what he wanted. Then he said, "Sire, I want this damsel." And he took her by the hand and led her away right in front of her husband, who was standing there. Her husband at once held him back from taking her, and struck Sir Brunoro; thus she wanted to go back to her husband, but still she had to go with Sir Brunoro.

At that point, all the people went back to the city, and King Marco, looking

at Tristano, said to him, "Sweet nephew, did you see how that knight dishonored that lady? I pray that you will go to rescue her."

Then Tristano called to Governale and said, "Now ready my arms and my horse." And as soon as he was armed and mounted, he rode after Brunoro. He found him at his castle, and Tristano began to call out, "Slow down, knight. You have no right to take her. I am King Marco's nephew."

Then Brunoro set himself to joust with Sir Tristano, and they began to strike. In the attack, they broke their lances, then unsheathed their swords. They began to strike and to make a great assault; Tristano struck Sir Brunoro such heavy blows that most of his armor hung in shreds down his back. Then Brunoro said, "Sir Tristano, there is no cause for the two of us to fight to the death. Rather ask the lady which of us pleases her most, and our quarrel will be over at once."

Tristano said that this pleased him well. Then they went to the lady and said, "Lady, our fight is finished. Now pick the one of us who pleases you most."

And the damsel said, "It happens that Tristano is a traitor, who for no cause should ever have allowed me to be taken from the court. Still, I want him the most."

Thus Brunoro departed and went on his way, and Tristano and the damsel went back to court, and Tristano returned her to her husband.

XXVI.

The story says that King Marco, seeing Tristano's prowess, every day became more and more suspicious of him, making the excuses of fearful and disloyal people who, having themselves no faith, can't believe in the faithfulness of others. He said to himself, "If Tristano stays in this country he will soon, through his prowess, try to claim lordship and keep the crown for himself." He tried to think of ways he might have his nephew killed or sent to such a country that he might never return to Cornovaglia; here he proved the proverb which says, "Merchants have shops, drinkers have taverns, players have chessboards, and all like goes with like." King Marco was accustomed in that country to the meanness of heart that leads to treachery and the greed which gives rise to envy, so that he was not comfortable with a man so different from the others, one who expected magnanimity.

Being so suspicious, and harboring such evil thoughts against the loyal

knight Sir Tristano, one day he summoned all his knights and barons to Tintoile. Then he got to his feet, saying, "Tristano, my lovely nephew, much I can and ought to love you, and much all the barons and knights of this country ought to honor you, for King Felissi left us slaves, and you have set us free, and delivered this country, which is rich in silver and gold.

"Still, one thing remains, as my barons have often reminded me; a king is not reasonable if he remains unmarried. It is my will that I have no wife unless I may have the one who, by you and by others, has been so praised for beauty and nobility. This is the daughter of King Languis of Irlanda, who has so captured my heart that because of her I can find neither rest nor peace. Thus I ask you for my sake to journey to the kingdom of Irlanda, and arrange it there by guile or by force that I might have her for my wife. I swear that this would be the greatest service you could give me, and the greatest pleasure."

Then good and loyal Tristano, with no malice in his heart, answered, "My lord, now that I know your will and your desire, I will cross the sea and go to Irlanda, and do everything in my power to win the lady for you."

The king had him give his glove on that vow, then said, "Tristano, I offer you gold and silver and whatever company you desire, and command you to leave this country within three days, never to return unless you bring with you the beautiful Isotta."

Tristano, hearing the command so clearly made, got busy and prepared all the things he had need of. He had a ship furnished with biscuits, meat, and fresh water, and had put within it three noble and lovely pavilions; then he asked for the company of sixty knights, all young, handsome, and nobly equipped. The king gave all this gladly, as if to say, "Oh well, take whatever you like, because I am sending you to such a place and such a country that you will never return to this kingdom."

Then Tristano ordered his company, and they got on board ship. Their fathers and mothers made a great lament; still, none of them had wives or children, because Tristano did not want to take people with him who thought of such high things. The mariners raised the sails; the weather and the winds were good so that in a short time they were on the high seas. King Marco, staying behind, said to himself, "Now I have made a certain vendetta, and I am free of all suspicion, for as soon as King Languis sees Tristano, he will have him put to death."

Meanwhile, for Tristano on the high seas, the good weather lasted four days, and then two contrary winds arose, and such a storm that they were all in danger of death. Then they took hope, and let the ship go at the will of the wind, so that in seven days they found themselves in a lovely port.

Tristano asked the master mariner where they had come to, and the man said, "We are in the kingdom of Longres, and that beautiful city you see is called Camellotto."

Tristano was very happy to hear this. He had all his people disembark, and had all three of the handsome pavilions set up on the shore and had strong shields hung outside, saying that for love of the beautiful land they would remain for five days and joust with any knight who happened by.

As they were waiting, two knights errant came by; one was Lionello and the other was Agravano. When they saw the shields, they stopped and demanded a joust. Then an old knight from the kingdom of Cornovaglia went to Tristano saying, "Here we have two knights who are demanding a joust, and you have brought that about by hanging those shields outside. Thus it seems better to me that they be taken down. Let us say to these knights that they should go away with good fortune, and that we are not knights errant or foreign knights, but messengers; that way you can avoid the joust."

At those words, Tristano became very angry, saying, "What an evil loss to the country of Cornovaglia that so much cowardice reigns there! I regret the day that I set you free!"

At once he hurried to arm himself, and in a short time was on his horse and going to meet the two knights. Sir Agravano rode first to this joust, because he had been knighted first. Challenging each other, they drew apart, and at the lowering of the lances gave two such great blows on their shields that Agravano's lance broke into pieces. But Tristano had given him such a blow that he sent him to earth with his horse, then he beat Sir Lionello.

Now the story stops telling about Sir Tristano, and we will tell of King Languis of Irlanda, and how he had come to the court of King Artù to defend himself for an accusation made against him, for which he had been summoned to court.

XXVII.

The masters of stories set down that at the time the tournament was held in Irlanda at the court of King Languis, four knights arrived whom the king received with great honor, because they were knights errant. But when they had been there three days, one of the knights was killed that evening in the court. His three companions went back to the court of King Artù, where they accused King Languis of having their friend killed with great treachery. King Artù, hearing those words, marvelled greatly, for King Languis was not a man to do such an evil thing, but was loyal and courteous. Still, because

he had been accused, King Artù sent him a summons to come to the city of Camellotto within three months to defend himself in battle against that accusation, against the knights who had accused him.

When King Languis received this clear command, he was the saddest king in the world, and very much afraid. Then he had summoned all his people and his knights, telling them how he was in danger of death, and how if he did not obey King Artù's command "he will come here with all his forces against you and me, and put my whole land to fire and flame. And if I go to Camellotto, I am not strong enough to stand against the knight who accuses me, but if I confess to this evil deed, I would be false to the truth and they will cut off my head. Because of all this, I do not know what I ought to do. But if there is anyone among you willing to take my fight upon himself, I will give him half my kingdom."

When they heard this news, the knights were very sad, but not one of them was brave enough to take that battle on himself. Then the king decided to go alone, and defend himself as best he could. He had a ship all prepared, and took with him a hundred great barons, and arranged that, in case he did not return, half his kingdom should go to his daughter Isotta the Blonde, and the other half to his nephew Amoroldino. Then they raised the sails. The winds and weather were favorable, and in ten days they were on the high seas.

As they sailed thus, King Languis looked toward the shore and saw the three pavilions, and asked whose they were. He was answered, "They belong to a Cornish baron called Sir Tristano." When King Languis heard that Tristano of Cornovaglia was here, at once he put in to the shore and had his people disembark, that is, only a dozen of his knights. Quickly they approached the pavilions, and asked a knight to take them to speak with Sir Tristano. The knight, a courteous man, did so at once. When Tristano and King Languis met they embraced each other, expressing great joy and celebration, and Tristano received him with great honor.

After they had rested in front of the pavilions three days, King Languis spoke to Sir Tristano and said, "Truly, noble sir, the time has now come when I could make much, much use of your great prowess."

Tristano answered, "Truly, sire, prowess, person, and all are at your service. I owe you a great deal, for through you I recovered my life. Thus tell me what fortune brings you here."

When Tristano had thus offered himself to the king, the king said, "Tristano, it is true, as you know, that a tournament was held in Irlanda; after you left we held another, to which came four knights errant, kinsmen of King Bando of Benoich. One was Brunoro the White, another was Bordo, a third was Lionello, and the fourth was Maragins. At the tournament, they proved themselves well, and when it was over they came to rest at my castle, and in good faith I honored them as well as I could. I do not know how and

I never could find out, but one of these knights was killed; that is, Maragins was killed one night in my court.

"And his three companions approached me with threats, saying that I had killed the knight, or that I had had him killed, but that is not true. When they returned to King Artù's court, they accused me of treason, and have had me summoned on pain of my lands to come to Camellotto to defend myself, or have myself defended in battle against the knight who accuses me. Hearing this command, so strong and clear, I gathered all my barons and told them what had happened, but none of them was bold enough to take my battle on himself; now I, considering King Artù's great power, have come to defend and exonerate myself from this evil deed, of which I am not guilty.

"I know I will not be acquitted, and I know the knight I have to battle is so strong I cannot possibly stand up to him; but I will die for justice, because I will be fighting against wrong. Therefore I ask of you, dear sire, for God's sake, that you will join with me, and choose to forget the wrongs I've done you in the past. May it please you now to uphold justice and chivalry, for I have been greatly wronged, and you are the knight most well known for defending justice.

"Thus I ask you as strongly as I can, please take this battle against the knight for me; the deed was made for you. For, noble sire, I swear to you I am not guilty of this death. I have been falsely accused, and as a king still I swear loyally to you that I am accused unjustly, and that I send you justly to the battle; therefore I pray you will undertake it. By my faith, I felt great sorrow at the death of that knight, and I still bear much shame because of it."

When Tristano heard what King Languis said, he felt very relieved and glad, saying to himself, "Now the very fortune I wanted and needed has fallen into my hands. Because of this, I'll be able to win Isotta the Blonde." Then he said aloud to the king, "Noble sire, I am very sorry for your trouble, and I want you to be assured that since I lived in your court and was cured by your daughter, you can send me to my death as often as you need."

King Languis was glad and joyful at those words, saying to Tristano, "If you will do so much for me there will not be a thing in my power in this world that I would not do for you; I want you to ask of me or my kingdom anything you please."

Then he summoned all the Irish knights, and Tristano spoke to them, saying, "Know that I have taken upon myself the trial by combat your king must make, and I will fight anyone who comes against him. But this much I say to you, that if God gives me grace to win this battle I want the king to grant me a boon, whatever I might demand of him."

The king said he was ready to do whatever Tristano might ask; and this is how Sir Tristano took King Languis' fight upon himself, so that they all passed the night in celebration until dawn.

XXVIII.

Then, when the night was past and the dawn of day had come, the king and Tristano got up and arrayed themselves in fine silken robes and went to amuse themselves in the meadow before the pavilions. At that point a damsel on horseback appeared, carrying a marvellous, beautiful shield that was decorated with two figures and covered in gold. One of the images was of a bold and loyal knight, and the other was the figure of a lady. But the shield was all open in front; that is, it was split down the middle between the two faces, and on down to the point, between the two figures as well. When Tristano saw that the shield was split like that, he thought it very strange, so he went toward the damsel, greeting her courteously, and saying, "Lady, God save you, where do you come from this early morning?"

The lady answered, "I am coming from Camellotto, where I went to speak with King Artù and his lady, Queen Ginevara, and to Sir Lancilotto, but I did not find them. They had ridden to the kingdom of Gaules to mourn for King Pellinoro, who has died, and now I am going to meet them there."

Then Tristano said, "Lady, for courtesy's sake, tell me why this shield is split like that."

And she replied, "Truly, knight, I can't yet tell you, for I have been forbidden to. But if you will tell me your name, I will tell you something of the matter."

And Tristano, because he wanted so much to find out about this adventure, told her his name. She then said, "Tristano, the truth is that in different countries there are a maiden and a knight who love each other with a loyal love and no bad intent; but their loyal love must turn into great delight (that is, carnal love) through no fault of their own, but as the result of a mistake. Therefore a lady of this country, who knows what has been and what shall be, and who wants to give warning of what she knows, is sending this shield to King Artù and Queen Ginevara.

"No longer is Lancilotto the noblest knight, and the most perfect and loyal love is not his. When perfect, loyal love will join the most beautiful and loyal lovers in the world, it will be between the most beautiful lady and the handsomest, most courteous, bravest knight in the world, and this shield will resolder itself, as if it had never been broken. And when the two loyal lovers die because of their love this shield will wear out, so that the figures on it will disappear."

Tristano then asked, "Tell me, who are this knight and this lady who will suffer so much for love?"

But the damsel answered, "I cannot tell you that, because I do not know; my lady has not told me."

Tristano said, "Who stays in Camellotto in place of King Artù?"

And she replied that two kings were there, King Agalone and King Allielle, who were waiting for King Languis of Irlanda to come to defend himself against an accusation. The king must fight a cousin of Sir Lancilotto who is a very bold knight, and the two kings are waiting to judge the outcome of that battle. At that, their conversation was over, and the damsel went on her way while Tristano returned to the pavilion where he had left King Languis.

XXIX.

If anyone should ask me who sent that shield, and whose the messenger was, and who were the knight and high lady destined for such a love, I would tell you according to how I found it in the good book of Sir Garo, or rather Gaddo, de'Lanfranchi of Pisa, which formerly belonged to Sir Piero, Count of Savoia,[16] brought from the great kingdom of Francia. That book says this: the lady who sent the shield was Fata Morgana, and she sent it to King Artù that he might keep it. She sent it also to warn him, because she could tell the future and knew what would happen in the time to come, and also to show Lancilotto and Queen Ginevara that there was in the world a handsomer knight and more beautiful lady than they, and that these two were going to have a stronger and more loyal love than theirs. This would be Tristano and Isotta the Blonde, who now loved each other with a loyal love. Tristano loved Isotta because she had saved him from death when he lay wounded by Amoroldo's arrow, and Isotta loved him for his prowess, and because she had taken him for her own loyal knight.

Afterwards, when by mistake they were given the love potion to drink, they loved each other with carnal love. The potion was so perfect that it led them to one death. On the day that their love was aroused, all at once the divided shield closed itself as if it had never been broken, and on the day of their death the shield grew old, and the figures faded.

So Tristano returned to King Languis and told him about the shield, and how the two kings waited in Camellotto to judge their battle, and the king resolved to set out with Tristano the next morning. But at that moment, the damsel of the shield came back making the greatest complaint in the world. Tristano went to meet her and asked her why she was crying so, and she answered, "At the edge of this desert I met the most villainous and out-

rageous knight in the world. He took my shield, and if I had not run away, truly he would have harmed me. Now I am the saddest lady in the world, because I cannot complete my embassy."

When Tristano heard this, at once he had his own shield brought, and his helmet, lance, and sword. He mounted, thus lightly armed because of his great hurry, and went with the damsel. As they entered the desert they encountered the knight, and Tristano challenged him to joust; they rode against each other, and exchanged two great blows, but Tristano beat the knight by the length of a lance and sent him hard to the ground. Afterwards, he commanded that he tell him his name, and the knight, who had no choice, said that he was Breus sanza Pietà. Tristano, realizing that this was Breus the anti-lover, ordered him to surrender himself, in Tristano's name, to Calvano the lover. Breus said that he would, and he gave the shield back to the lady.

Then each one went his own way, and Tristano returned to the pavilions. Here tables were set, and they went in to eat. Afterwards, King Languis and all his barons arrayed themselves in robes of fine silk, and Tristano armed himself, and had his good horse armed in fine gear, and they all rode to the city of Camellotto.

When they reached the palace, they dismounted, leaving their horses in the piazza. They ascended to the great hall where the two kings stayed with many knights and barons, and King Languis greeted and bowed to all the people, saying to the two kings, "My lords, I have received a command from King Artù that I appear before before him to defend myself against an accusation of treachery. Therefore I appear before you to defend myself as a knight who is not guilty, for I have done no wrong."

At these words a bold and eager knight came forward, Sir Brunoro the Red, nephew of King Bando of Benoich. He said, "How can you say this, King Languis, and deny that you had killed, or killed yourself, a knight in your court who was our companion. I will prove by force of arms that you are guilty."

And at those words Sir Tristano stepped forward, saying, "My lords, I am a knight from a distant country who is very displeased to see one knight accusing another without just cause. Thus I will take King Languis' battle upon myself and will show by force of arms that he is guilty of no treachery, and that he has been falsely accused."

Brunoro said to Tristano, "Since you have lost all your wits and want to die for King Languis, I am well pleased to do battle with you. If you win, I will make you a recantation as a knight who wrongly fights, but if I beat you, I will give you good penance for all your sins as one ought to give knights who defend evil, and I will cut off King Languis' head."

Thus the two knights came to accord, and exchanged gloves in front of the two kings. The kings then decreed that they should be on the field before Camellotto in three days, to decide the question by combat.

XXX.

The true story tells that when the day set for the battle came, King Languis and Tristano and their knights rode out of the city of Camellotto and came to the great tourney field. At once the two kings arrived, seating themselves on two rich seats of ivory, and then came Sir Brunoro, accompanied by Sir Astore di Mare, Lionello, and Bordo, and by some other knights. Then Sir Briobris came instructing him, saying, "Cousin, now it is up to you to strengthen and honor our family name from this day forward. Guard yourself well and make no mistakes, so that what you have said will be the truth."

Tristano, who needed no instruction, when he saw Brunoro came forward saying, "Knight, I challenge you. On guard!" Then they moved away from each other, and each one struck his good horse with his spurs, and the horses ran strong and willing. At the lowering of the lances, they exchanged two great blows: Brunoro broke his lance against Tristano, though he did no other harm, but Tristano knocked him sprawling to the earth from his horse.

As soon as Brunoro was on the ground he got to his feet and put his hand to his sword, saying to Tristano, "Knight, even though you have knocked me down, if you love your horse, dismount. I call you to fight, for even though you have unhorsed me, I may yet claim the victory."

At that, Tristano dismounted and grasped his sword, and they began a cruel battle, trading mighty blows. They fought so vigorously that in a little while each one had wounded the other. The two kings, and all the knights of King Bando's family, realizing that Brunoro was losing, were very much afraid for him. He had lost a lot of blood, and his blows were growing weaker while Tristano's grew stronger. It seemed that the longer they fought, the more vigorously Tristano struck, and while the other was tired and weary, Tristano seemed always refreshed. That was because he was a wise and worthy fighter, and seldom did all that he might have done.

The two of them fought like this until Brunoro stopped, saying to Tristano, "Knight, I know well that you are the best fighter in the world. Therefore, if it pleases you, I would like to know your name, and I will tell you mine. Know that I am called Brunoro, the cousin of Lancilotto."

Tristano answered, "Sir knight, since you have told me your name, it is fitting that I tell you mine. Therefore know that I am called Tristano of Cornovaglia."

Brunoro, when he heard that this was Tristano, who was already so famous throughout the world, comforted himself and said then, "I tell you truly that I am already so tired that I would call myself beaten. But since I know now who you are, let us begin our battle anew and fight to the finish. I don't

care if I die, for if you kill me it will be no dishonor to me or to my kinsmen, for there can be no shame in dying by the hand of the best knight in the world."

Then they began to fight again, giving each other great blows. Soon their armor was almost completely destroyed, and their flesh exposed, and the ground red with their blood; still they fought furiously. Then Tristano gathered all his strength and struck Brunoro such a blow on his helmet that his sword cut through both the helmet and the iron cap, making the blood spurt out over his face and out of his nose and mouth. He fell to the ground badly wounded, and lay there as if he were almost unconscious, his pulse so weak it could hardly be found. Tristano did not want to kill him, so he said, "Knight, knight, should we fight any more?"

With great effort, Brunoro tried to rise, but could only say, "I give up this battle, right or wrong, that I had against King Languis."

Then Sir Tristano went before the two kings and said, "My lords, I have fought so hard with Brunoro that we both need a rest. Therefore I wish, if it pleases you, that between King Languis and him be made a good and true peace, so that King Languis can return safely to his own country as a knight freed from all charges of treason."

When they heard Tristano's words, the two kings took counsel with many other barons, saying, "Now we can see openly and truly the great nobility and good breeding of this knight, for we see that even though he is the victor, in his magnanimity he sues for peace." Then they said to Tristano, "Sir knight, we will in no way grant King Languis peace if first we do not know your name."

Then Tristano, seeing that he could do nothing else, told them he was called Tristano of Cornovaglia. If anyone should ask me why Tristano did not say he was from Liones, where he was born, I will tell him that in those days a man could choose his title from either of two rights: first, for the place he was born, or second, for the place he was made a knight. Since Tristano was so proud of his knighthood, he said he was from Cornovaglia, because he had been knighted there.

When the two kings heard the name of Tristano, who many times they had heard mentioned for great prowess and many virtues, they said, "Knight, you have proved yourself so well in this battle that King Languis can stay, go, or come, however you will. By your prowess and good will, King Languis is acquitted of all accusations ever made against him up to today. We know that if you had not considered Brunoro because of his kinsmen, you could have killed him in the first encounter."

At that point, Tristano and King Languis and their knights returned to their pavilions, and the two kings remained to write a letter to be sent to Gaules, telling the truth about King Languis and the battle fought between Tristano and Brunoro. Their messenger rode so that he came to the city of

Parigi before King Artù, and gave him the letter. The king opened it, and gave it to Sir Ivano to read; the letter said this:

XXXI.

To the powerful lord, great nobility and honor. My lord King Artù, your Allielle and Agalone send greetings and highest personal salutations to the nobility of your crown, to the honor and worthiness of your lady Queen Ginevara, and to Sir Lancilotto and all the other knights and barons who wait upon your excellence.

"Know that on the twenty-fifth day of September King Languis came from Irlanda to the city of Camellotto to defend himself against the accusation for which you had summoned him. He brought with him a young knight, new to our country, who acted as his champion and entered the fight against Sir Brunoro. Brunoro was beaten with the lance, then fighting on foot with swords the foreign knight was also the victor, but for courtesy's sake he forbore killing his opponent.

"Therefore let it be known that King Languis has been vindicated by the prowess of the best knight in the world, and as we were commissioned by you to oversee the trial by battle, thus we decide and pass judgement in complete agreement. The knight who championed King Languis is the bravest, noblest, handsomest, and most courteous who ever might wear a sword or come into this court; he is the fountain of courtesy, honor, and chivalric worthiness, and his name is Sir Tristano, son of King Meliadus of Liones."

After the letter had been read and solemnly heard, King Artù showed great happiness. He had brought to him the conferment of the Tavola, that is, a book in which were written the names of the knights errant, and the laws and customs they were to uphold. King Artù had the name of Tristano inscribed therein, and then he sealed it shut. That book was never again unsealed, except for King Amoroldo and Sir Galasso.

Then to further ennoble the occasion, King Artù had the young squire who had brought the letter knighted, and gave him a fine and noble castle called Cosignano, and Sir Lancilotto gave him arms and a horse.

When King Languis and Tristano got back to their pavilions, and had rested three days, Tristano said to the king, "Sire, you know the agreement made between you and me."

The king replied, "Tristano, there is nothing you could ask of me that

is in my power that I would not do at once for your good pleasure. Because of this, I pray you, if you do not mind crossing the sea, that you and your people return with me to Irlanda."

Tristano said that he was ready to come, and truthfully, he was glad of such a request. They had the pavilions taken down, and all the people got on board ship with much happiness and celebration. They raised the sails and the weather was good, so that in twelve days they made harbor in Irlanda.

Having disembarked, they went to the castle, and there all the people showed their great joy. Inside the palace, Queen Lotta received her lord with great honor, and the king said, "Lady, are you glad of my return?"

When she said yes, he told her, "Then thank God, but thank also Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia, who defended me." Then she went to Tristano and embraced him and kissed him and made peace with him, and all the people did him great honor.

XXXII.

The masters of stories say that when Tristano had rested ten days in the Irish court, he went to the king and said, "Sire, do you remember the covenant we made?"

The king replied, "Tristano, I well know that I owe you a boon, I've promised it to you and I want to give it, so ask boldly for anything in my power to grant."

With no more delay, then, Tristano said, "My lord, I ask for your daughter Isotta, that she may become the wife of King Marco, my uncle; he wants to crown her with the kingdom of Cornovaglia."

Then the king summoned the beautiful Isotta the Blonde to come before him, and then he said, "Tristano, it would make me very happy to give you my daughter to be your own wife. I know of no king in the world who would not be content to have you as his son-in-law, and I would like to give you half my kingdom, and with you I would be happier than with any other king in the world."

Still, Tristano said, "Sire, I ask her for King Marco, my uncle."

The king replied, "For courtesy's sake I ask that you take Isotta for your own wife. Furthermore, I will give you the crown of my whole kingdom, for in you reign the four things which make a man perfect in this world, especially in chivalry. You are noble and of high parentage; you are cour-

companions or anyone else what you have seen or heard, for there is great danger in it for my lord Tristano and your lady Isotta, and also for us. Then Brandina calmed herself and was a little comforted, hearing Governale's wise counsel.

XXXV.

It happened that Tristano and his companion were on the high seas six days. On the seventh, four contrary winds arose which tossed the ship around in such a way that they were all in danger of death. It was of no use to throw anything overboard, nor could they control the ship by its tiller or its sails, so as a last resort the sailors took hope, and let the ship go as it would under the lordship of the winds. The great tempest and terrible storm lasted three days, but when it subsided they found themselves inside a beautiful strong harbor. When they reached the river's mouth, the entrance to the port was blocked and closed behind them with a strong chain, and they landed by a tower on the shore, from which were hanging giant cudgels.

Then Tristano asked the master mariner where they had come, and the man began to groan, saying that they had come to the worst country in the world: "For this is called the Isola della Malvagia Usanza, and that strong castle you see there is the Castello del Proro."

At that point, there appeared eighty knights and a good four hundred foot soldiers all armed, and they came shouting, "Surrender yourselves as prisoners and come out of the ship at once and come to the castle!"

Tristano, seeing it would not be worth much to demonstrate his valor here, followed the counsel of the wise man who said, "Where a man cannot get up, let him learn how to sit down," and disembarked with his companion. All of them were led to the Castello del Proro and put into a dungeon of the sort where no one who enters comes out again until he is dead. They passed that night with many sighs, and when morning arrived two knights came to their prison. When Tristano saw them he said, "Tell me, sires, and God save you, do we have to stay in this prison forever?" The knights said yes, that it was according to the custom of the island. Then Tristano said, "What? Is there no remedy by which we can attempt to get free?"

And then the knights said yes, "by one such way: if among you there happens to be, or if into this country should come, some brave knight with boldness and strength enough to fight our lord and win, he can come out

and thus deliver all the people from the prison. Or, truly, if you have among you a lady who happens to be more beautiful than the lady of our lord, than it could happen that she alone will be set free."

Then Tristano, hearing such words, took comfort and said, "Here among us is a knight who will gladly fight with your lord for his own freedom and that of his friends, and we have also a lady of most high beauty and grace. But gladly would I know why you have seized us and imprisoned us, since we have never done anything to offend you."

The two knights smiled at Tristano, and told him the reason and the way this custom had been decreed and was maintained, saying, "And rest assured that we know what we are talking about, since we are officials of this lord." Then one said, "We tell the truth; we are the seneschals of this island, and because of this it behooves us to act as our lord pleases. Still, gracious sire, we would advise and tell you that in ancient times this land was held by giants only; that is, until the time that Cristo was crucified. Then, the lord of this land was a mad Jewish giant called Dialantes who had twelve sons. It happened that after the death of Cristo there arrived here a great baron of saintly life, called Giuseppe of Bramanzia; he went about preaching and showing the Christian faith, and soon he had converted a fourth part of the people on this island.

"Then our lord Dialantes, seeing how he was losing his people, thought about reconquering them. He took all twelve of his sons, who had been converted to Christianity, and had their heads cut off and had the heads and bodies thrown into the main piazza, to give others reason to fear his law.

"Then he sent out a great proclamation, and made it known that anyone else who believed Giuseppe would suffer the same fate as his sons. He had all his people armed, on horseback and on foot, and they went into the great wilderness. Here they captured Giuseppe and all who followed him, and cut off their heads. Afterwards, he had this castle built, and had its foundation made. That is, in its foundations are the bones and flesh of Christians, and he gave orders that their blood be mixed into the sand and lime with which it is walled and finished. Those who were beheaded numbered 76,432, and this was how Dialantes recaptured his people.

"And because it was foreigners who had done such great damage, he decreed that any foreigner arriving in this country should be seized and put in prison, and no one could ever be freed except by the event I described to you. Then if the lord wins, he will cut off the stranger's head, and if the stranger wins, he must do it to the lord. Then he will be the lord, and must maintain the same custom, and fight with any foreigner who comes and demands the contest.

"And if a lady comes who does not want to stay in prison, she must be compared to the lady of our lord. Whichever of them is the uglier will have her head cut off by the victorious knight and the other will become his lady."

At that, Tristano said to them, "My lords, I understand the conditions very well. I am ready to fight as you have said, and to have my lady judged, for she is very beautiful."

Then the two knights took Tristano and Isotta out of prison and brought them to a beautiful palace. Then they went to their lord, who was called Brunoro the Brown, father of the high prince Galeotto and a knight of the Tavola Vecchia. He also had come to this island by fortune of the wind and had fought with Sir Mago, the count, and nephew of Dialantes, who was at that time lord of the island. He had cut off his and his lady's heads, and afterwards he had cut off the head of another knight who had arrived from Gaules, and had married his lady because she was more beautiful than the lady of Sir Mago.

When the two seneschals were before their lord, they said, "Sir Brunoro, among the prisoners is a knight who wants to fight for his freedom. Therefore be on the field in the morning and bring your lady with you, for this knight has his. And be warned, for we believe, sire, that he can get the better of you."

At once Brunoro said, "I am ready."

Even though he had not ordained this custom, he had to maintain and augment it, in compliance, with all his power, and for this necessity he readied himself.

XXXVI.

When the next day came, Tristano armed himself to great advantage, and had the beautiful and pleasing Isotta arrayed in fine, rich silken robes, and courteously had her mounted on one of her gentle palfreys. When they went to the place where the battle was to be, Brunoro and his lady Bagotta arrived on the other side. Afterwards, there came two knights, one old and the other young, and also two ladies, one young and the other old; they began to measure and compare the lady of Brunoro with the lovely Isotta. They said that the lady Bagotta was beautiful and noble, but truly she did not seem to be beautiful at all next to Isotta, who had in herself all that a lady ought to have of nobility and beauty. Thus the two knights and the two ladies agreed that Isotta was by far the more beautiful, and was the most beautiful who had ever entered the harbor or come to the castle. They pronounced the sentence, and said to Tristano and Brunoro that whichever of them won the battle would have to cut off Bagotta's head and take the

beautiful Isotta: "Therefore, noble lords," said these four, "whichever of you is the victor will take this more beautiful one and cut off the head of this Bagotta."

Brunoro felt the greatest sorrow about this, and said to himself, "If I lose the battle, I will be dead, but if I win, I will have to cut off my lady's head." At that he was very miserable, but Sir Tristano also lamented strongly, saying, "If I lose this battle, I will be dead, that's for sure; but I will die two deaths: one when my head is cut off, and the other, more terrible one when the beautiful Isotta will be delivered into Brunoro's hands, and he takes with her his pleasure and delight." It made him very sad.

The two noble knights rode onto the field. When they came face to face they challenged each other, then they struck each other so fiercely with their lances on their shields that each sent the other to the level ground, horse and all. Then vigorously they leapt up, swords in hand, and began a cruel exchange, giving each other such heavy blows that just to watch it was a marvel. Brunoro was taller than Tristano, and on horseback had the advantage because of his height, but Tristano, who was a wise and experienced fighter, conserved his strength so that he had it to draw on at need; Tristano many times wearied the opponents who fought him before he showed the extent of his own force and valor. In this first encounter, however, each knight proved himself well.

When they had rested from the first assault they began the second, giving each other great, cruel blows, the greatest that could be described. Their armor was all torn and broken, and they struck flesh with their swords so much that blood flowed to the earth. Their hauberks, their coats of mail, and most of the rest of their armor could be seen lying in great pieces on the ground. This second assault was so fierce that few battles have ever been as strong between two fighters. Even their powerful horses could not stay on their feet, they were so weary.

The beautiful Isotta, seeing her friend Tristano in such a dangerous battle, seeing him lose so much blood, and seeing his armor cut right off his back, was almost dead with fright. Then she lifted her heart and thoughts to heaven, saying these fair and pious words to God:

XXXVII.

You blessed Iesu Cristo who
Through your noble and courteous kindness
Descended from heaven to earth
And was born of the pure virgin Maria,
Incarnating yourself within her by your own will
And the pleasure of your heavenly Father;
And then were born on Christmas Day;
And allowed yourself to be killed to save the people;
And ordained baptism among faithful Christians;
And were adored by the three Magi,
Barons from beyond the mountains;
Gold, incense, and myrrh they brought to give you;
You escaped into Egypt when Herod wanted to seize you;
You were born and bred in fear and poverty:
You had neither bed nor cover nor house to live in,
Little to drink and little to eat;
Your mother raised you with such nobility
Each trouble she took seemed like nothing to her;
She was content
To see you preaching before the people
The law of God, your Father.
When you were lost in the temple, you gave her a mortal sorrow;
You disappeared among the Philistines when you wanted to help them;
You lodged in the house of Simone the leper;
You pardoned the Maddalena, this is the truth;
And you brought buried Lazzero back to life.
You set free the adulteress the Scribes had brought you,
Saying *Qui sine peccato*, let him take up a stone.
You left soon, such was your saintliness,
For envy of which, the people accused you;
And for money the disloyal Giuda betrayed you.
On Holy Thursday you made communion,
At that holy table a celestial meal;
And went into the garden with your disciples to pray.
As you remained in this holy prayer
The Jews and Scribes and Pharisees came to take you:
The power of your potent name
Made them fall upon the ground;
You showed that if you wanted you could save yourself from them.

That night, to Anna's house they led you,
And your mother saw you crowned with thorns;
Saw you nailed with great nails to the cross;
Vinegar and gall you had for your drink;
A sad way your mother had to take
That Giovanni for himself should accept you;
She had to see pierced your holy side,
And then she fainted from mortal sorrow.
You were laid to rest in Niccodemo's tomb:
At the hour of compline she saw you interred;
On holy Saturday you came back to life,
And went to comfort your sweet mother.
You delivered your servants out of hell,
And at the Ascension you arose into heaven;
You sent the Holy Spirit to your apostles,
So they would become ennobled and bold to preach,
That none need fear death who have your grace.
You left us your doctrine and the evangelists to preach,
How to be saved and be your good servants.
We believe in you the Creator and Cristo the Redeemer;
Honored Holy Spirit;
Thus I make devotedly,
To you, my Lord, devotedly,
This prayer, devotedly:
Have pity on and guard my Tristano
From death and endless prison,
That he need not stay here, that he won't have to stay.

In herself, the lovely Isotta made this prayer as she watched the two knights fight so bitterly together.

This battle was perilous and very exhausting, because Tristano was one of the best knights in the world, and Sir Brunoro was one of the noblest fighters to have sat at the Tavola Vecchia. By then they were both wounded so that blood flowed to the ground; they had both lost much blood, but to tell the truth, Brunoro had lost more than Tristano. Certainly the armor of both of them was scarred and broken by the great blows each baron gave.

But, as the true story tells, Sir Tristano, who was by nature wise and wonderfully brave, best of fencers and most confident of all knights, and compactly made, had reserved his strength well. He began to want to show all of his courage and his power, and advanced with his sword leading Brunoro to left and to right, doing many deeds that showed his skill in battle. Soon one of the blows that Tristano continuously let fall on Brunoro's head was so strong and so hard that it cut through the helmet and the cap of mail,

cleaving his head to the teeth. That blow was so mighty that it made both the man and his horse fall dead to the ground.

Tristano, seeing Brunoro dead, turned to the knights of the castle, who were there to make sure it was all done according to custom. He said to them, "Sires, am I now freed from your prison?" But they said no, that he could not be free until he had cut off the heads of Brunoro and the lady. "And take your own lady to wife, for such is the custom of this island, that the bravest knight have the most beautiful lady."

Tristano replied, "My lords, in no way will I do such evil and such villainy. It is not right that a knight errant behead a lady or a dead knight. Furthermore, this damsel can in no way be my wife, for she is promised in marriage to another."

But they said, "Truly, knight, rest assured that it can be no other way; we will not betray our custom for your sake. Even if this maiden were your daughter, you would have to marry her. But wisdom will come later. Do as you please, we won't force you. But this custom is an established thing, and you ought to honor it."

Sir Tristano replied, "I would sooner go back to prison before I would cut off this lady's head; it would be too great a madness and villiany to cut off a lady's head. I am a knight errant; in no way will I do such a thing."

They answered him, "Please yourself, knight, but you must do one thing or the other. Cut off this lady's head or go back to prison with your companions and stay there the rest of your life on bread and water, and never come out until you are dead."

Then Sir Tristano, seeing himself in such an extreme and bitter situation, and that here his prowess as a fighter was worth nothing, reluctantly made up his mind to cut off the lady's head, but only hers and Brunoro's, since he could do nothing else. Then he married his lady Isotta.[18]

Afterwards they were led to the Castello del Proro, where the seneschals made him take the oath, and gave him the scepter of lordship. Tristano immediately let all of his people out of prison, but still there was no way that any of them could leave the island. Then Tristano lived in great delight with the beautiful Isotta, lacking nothing except a means of leaving the island.

XXXVIII.

The storytellers say that to Sir Brunoro remained a daughter, who was called Dalis. When she saw that her mother and father were dead, she came before the lords of the castle, that is, Tristano and the ten seneschals of the island, and asked their permission to leave the island with two of her maidens. They granted her request and had a boat brought from storage, giving it to her with four men to sail it. Know that all the ships of the island were stored away under ten separate keys of which each seneschal held one.

Then Dalis took the two heads and put them in a casket in the ship and set out for the high seas. The weather was fine so that she found herself on land within eight days. She had come to the kingdom of Longres, to that part that was held by the King of a Hundred Knights.

Then the maiden disembarked and took horse to go searching for her brother, the high prince Galeotto, to tell him of the great wrong that had been done to the two of them. She rode for a week, searching everywhere, but still she could find no sign of him. Not discovering any news, she spent the night in the castle of the Enchantresses, where she met an armed knight. She asked him for news, and whether he had encountered a knight known as the high prince Galeotto, and the knight said, "Maiden, why do you ask about him?"

She responded, "Truly, I want to tell him of his great injury."

He asked, "What injury has been done him?"

And she said, "This is the news, true and certain. Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia came to the Isola dei Giganti and cut off the heads of Brunoro his father and Bagotta his mother, according to the custom of the island: I have both their heads here in my casket."

Then the knight began to weep and, lifting his visor, said, "Maiden, I am that Galeotto you were searching for."

The damsel lifted the veil from her face and they recognized each other at once; together they began to make the greatest complaint in the world. Galeotto then said, "My sister, don't cry any more, for crying does no good. There are other ways to take high vengeance for our shame."

At that, Galeotto sent for the King of a Hundred Knights, who was near the castle of the Enchantresses. When he came and heard such news he was very sorrowful, and had the two heads honorably buried in the abbey of Lanorio. Then Galeotto said to the king, "Know that I would have had my greatest wish in the world if I could have seen Sir Tristano, and seen him with love rather than with hatred. However, I am about to go to the Isola dei Giganti and take vengeance on him."

The king said, "Galeotto, I want to come with you."

Galeotto answered that he was well pleased with that, "But instead of coming with me, come after me with a company of six hundred knights, and while my battle with Sir Tristano is going on, you land in another part of the island and take the Castello del Proro and put all the people to death. Then if I need your help, you can give it to me against Sir Tristano."

Then they took leave of each other, and Galeotto went alone to the harbor. Here he found a ship ready to go to Irlanda; he took passage on it, and the mariners hoisted the sails. The weather was good, and soon they were out to sea.

Then said Galeotto, "Noble lords, you must make a journey other than the one to Irlanda, because I want to go to the harbor of the Isola dei Giganti."

The captain said, "Why, sir, would you want to be taken there? Don't you know that anyone who goes there or comes there can never again depart or get away?"

And all of the sailors said, "We won't go there! In no way do we want to go there!"

Then Galeotto answered, "By my faith, we will go there together, whether you want to or not." But they still said they did not wish to go. Galeotto took his sword in hand and cut off two of the sailors' heads, so that the others agreed to go out of fear. The captain directed his tiller and used his skill so that he had the ship inside the harbor of Proro within nine days; as soon as they were inside the harbor, it was chained up.

In a little while, some hundred knights and three hundred foot soldiers came to the harbor crying, "Surrender yourselves our prisoners." Then Galeotto came out of the ship, saying to them, "My lords, it is not necessary to put me in prison, for I am the prince Galeotto the Brown, son of Sir Brunoro the Brown. I have come here for no other reason than to fight with Sir Tristano your lord, and take high vengeance on him. Therefore go to him and tell him to arm himself well when he comes to the field in the morning, to fight with me."

Then the two seneschals went to Sir Tristano, saying, "Sire, the high Prince Galeotto has come here only to take vengeance on you: thus in the morning you must be on the field of battle."

Tristano said to himself, "Now I am the luckiest knight in the world," and replied aloud that all would be done, saying, "Now I will encounter one of the bravest knights ever to bear arms, who through his excellence has already conquered more than twenty-eight kingdoms."

When the next day came, Tristano armed himself to great advantage, and coming to the field, found Galeotto already there. When Galeotto saw Tristano, he began to weep heavily, at the sight of the one who had killed his mother and father. At that point they faced each other and exchanged challenges; thus began the hard-fought battle between the two noble warriors who were the flowers of chivalry.

XXXIX.

As soon as the two knights had saluted, they drew apart from each other and readied their lances. They met, giving such great blows on their shields that they broke each others' cinch and girth and breastband, sending each to earth, saddle and all. But the two good knights, who were quick and keen, got at once to their feet and gripped their iron maces, beginning a fierce battle before the people of the island who had gathered to look on. They exchanged such huge blows that their helmets rang on their heads and their shields shattered on their arms. For the second assault, they used swords, and began to strike each other, giving such blows without stint that in a short time they had nearly destroyed each other's armor. The brave knights had so many wounds on their bodies that their blood flowed down and reddened the ground. You could see their bruised and livid flesh, marked by blows and sweat, as each one struggled to stay up.

The people marvelled greatly at that noble battle and those noble blows, and the fine things the knights did in this encounter. But well and truly each one said under his breath that Tristano proved himself better and more nobly, and was gaining the advantage in the battle. For still, even though Galeotto expected help, it was always he who spoke, that is, to ask for respite. Tristano had not yet asked for a rest, because he had naturally the greatest endurance, and was much wiser than his opponent in battle. When Galeotto called for time, Tristano would say, "Knight, don't rest for my sake; let it be according to your will."

Then they rested a little, to recover their strength and endurance, and afterwards began their battle again. They fought so vigorously that neither gave the other a moment's rest or any mercy. As this battle raged between them, a knight rode up, shouting, "Help, flee, alas! We are all dead! We have lost the Castello del Proro—the King of a Hundred Knights and his companions are doing great damage!"

Then the people of the island who had gathered to watch the battle all ran away, so that soon only the two combattants remained, and the lady Isotta, who prayed to Galeotto and Tristano to cease their battle and make a truce or true peace between themselves.

At that, here came the King of a Hundred Knights with more than 600 soldiers; twenty were riding in front, their lances ready, crying "Death to Tristano of Cornovaglia!" At that, Isotta nearly fainted, but she threw herself before these knights, clinging to their bridles and crying for mercy. Her dread and suffering were so great that none could look at her without weeping.

The prince Galeotto, seeing his knights, said to Tristano, "Now you are as good as dead, for these people have come for no other reason except to put you to death."

Tristano replied, "Galeotto, I understand what you say, but you are only saying it to frighten me. For I well know that you are a great baron who has done high deeds, and you will never consent that our battle be finished except between you and me. We began it, and we should finish it; I will not guard myself against any knight but you. Then if I am the victor and these knights want to fight me, I will by no means disappoint them."

At that point, here came some dozen knights ready to strike Tristano with their lances, but Tristano made a great leap and came to Galeotto's side. Then Galeotto commanded his knights not to interfere with the fight, and following his orders, they drew back. Sir Tristano, seeing Galeotto's courtesy and remembering his own offense, humbled his heart and took his sword by the point and held it out for Galeotto to take, saying, "Sire, I ask you for courtesy's sake to pardon me the wrong I have done you, for I swear that what I did was not to injure anyone, but rather to free my companion and me. And I did not come to this island on purpose, but was blown here by the wind."

Galeotto, hearing Tristano's words, knew that he was telling the truth. And he saw that he himself would probably lose the battle because of wanting to kill Tristano without help, so he took his sword by the point and held it out for Sir Tristano to take, saying, "I pardon you, Tristano, all my evil will, and I do this for three reasons: first, I know that the great wrong you did me was not for hatred or ill will; you did it because you were bound by this island's evil customs, for there was no greater friendship in the world than that between your father and me. Another reason is that you are surely the best knight in the world, and I see quite clearly that you would win this battle if I tried to kill you without help. My third reason is for this damsel's sake, she who makes here such a lament and a piteous complaint; truly she has so touched my heart that I am about to weep myself."

Then Sir Tristano thanked Galeotto warmly, and each of them sheathed his sword and threw his shield on the ground, then ran to embrace the other in peace and friendship, unlacing their helmets. Galeotto said to Tristano, "This angelic creature who makes such a plea for you so touched my heart that I could not bear her sorrow; truly, now that I see her beauty, I do not believe that she was born in this world, but was formed in paradise. I beg you to tell me what her lineage is."

Tristano told Galeotto truthfully what had happened, how she was the daughter of King Languis of Irlanda, and how he had won her as King Marco's wife. Galeotto said, "Now I see well that King Marco is lord of two kingdoms, for this is a greater treasure and worth more than the whole realm of Cornovaglia. But I say this to you: if you take her to him before you find out whether she feels love, I will call you the Knight of the Lost Cause."

Tristano replied, "It would be better for me to lose such a cause than to be thought disloyal in this matter."

The beautiful and gracious Isotta, seeing that the two knights had made peace, was very happy about it. She took Galeotto by the hand and led him to the palace where she treated their wounds. When Tristano had stayed on this island four months, he had his ship furnished with meat and biscuits, then took leave of Galeotto and the King of a Hundred Knights. Galeotto gave Isotta a ring whose precious stone was worth more than a good castle. Then Tristano and his companion got on board, and the captain directed the tiller of the ship toward the port at Cornovaglia.

Galeotto, remaining behind, wrote a letter to King Artù, describing the battle between Tristano and himself. Then he had the Castello del Proro torn down and forbade all evil customs. He ordered that any foreigner who came to the island could stay or come or go, safe and secure for ten days, at the expense of the lords of the island. He left as viceroy a knight of Scozia who was called Sir Dolanzie; then, with all his people, he returned to his own country.

His squire so rode with the letter that he was soon before King Artù; he presented it to him on behalf of King Galeotto, and the letter said this:

XL.

Greetings to magnificent, illustrious, benign, esteemed, and gracious King Artù, the sum of all power, magnanimity, and honor, from your close friend and humble servant Galeotto, with all prayers, salutations and good love. Be it known that the young and gracious knight, Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia, by the fortunes of the weather and a great tempest of wind came to the Isola degli Giganti, where he fought and killed my father Brunoro and cut off my mother's head, according to the custom of the island, by which he was bound. To vindicate my shame I sailed to this island and fought with him, courage for courage and strength for strength. I was losing this fight, for he is surely the bravest, boldest, and best warrior in the world; because of his prowess I offered him peace. I then stayed on the island with the forces of the King of a Hundred Knights, tearing down the fortress of Proro, and putting an end to their evil custom."

When King Artù heard this letter, he was sad about the death of Brunoro, but very glad about the good news of Sir Tristano. As for Lancilotto, he vowed that he would go to Cornovaglia at once, not returning until he had seen and spoken to Sir Tristano.

Meanwhile, Tristano was on the high seas, he and his beautiful companion Isotta. The winds and the weather were with them, so that in nine days they were inside the harbor at Tintoile. Then Tristano had King Marco informed of his return.

King Marco was unhappy to hear it, for he had hoped Tristano would never come back; he had sent the young knight away out of envy, when he had seen that he was so brave and courteous and good. But he changed his mind when he saw the lady Tristano had brought. Seeing Isotta so beautiful, courteous, and charming, dressed in such elegant and becoming clothes, he become far happier than anyone alive. Then he valued Tristano over all other knights, for his loyalty and wisdom and prowess. When he heard the truth about the great trouble he had endured, and the high deeds he had done, he and all his barons marvelled at it. When they came to the palace, all the people made a great feast and celebration.

When evening came, Governale summoned Brandina and said to her, "Lady, you know how things stand between Tristano and Isotta, and how you and I are to blame because we were unwise and incautious. When Isotta goes tonight to King Marco's bed, he will find out that she is not a virgin; she will be the most disgraced lady in the world, and Tristano will be blamed for it. This danger can't be avoided by anyone's sacrifice but yours. So I pray that for the love you bear your lady Isotta, and for the services Tristano might do for you, that you will go this first evening to King Marco's bed, and so ransom the error that Tristano and Isotta have made."

Then the loyal and faithful Brandina said to Governale, "With God's help, I had hoped to keep and preserve my virginity until my death, but since such a need and such a mistake have occurred, and so that my lady will not be disgraced or found guilty by the king, you plan how it may be done, and I am ready to do as you command me."

On the evening of the next day, when it was time to go to sleep, the ladies went with Isotta as far as her chamber door, and certain ones went in to put her to bed, then each one went to her own sleeping quarters and no one remained except Brandina and Governale. At that, here came into the room King Marco and Tristano, and the king lay down beside Isotta. Then Sir Tristano put out all of the lamps in the room, and when the king asked why he did this, he replied, "Sire, it is the Irish custom that when a maid lies with her husband for the first time, all the lights are put out, because in the first experience, virgins are too much ashamed."

Then the king said, "That is a good custom, for it comes of great courtesy."

While the king was speaking with Tristano, Governale softly and courteously lifted Isotta out of bed, and Brandina got in where her lady had been. Tristano and Isotta lay down on another bed that had been prepared nearby. And the king that first night made love to Brandina with good will, thinking that he embraced the beautiful Isotta, and that he took solace with her.

When the king had behaved thus with Brandina, he called to Governale to light the lamps. At once, Isotta got up, as she had been told to, and so did Brandina. While Isotta softly and secretly went to Brandina's side, Brandina got out of bed, then the beautiful Isotta lay down. At that moment the lights went on, with great celebration and much noise of laughter, so that the king would not notice anything.

Then the king, left with Isotta and seeing her so beautiful, and knowing and seeing proof of her virginity, was very happy, and slept soundly until morning. In the morning he got up and summoned all his barons and ladies and knights and maidens to the great hall, where he crowned Isotta with half his kingdom, and gave the other half to Tristano because he had brought him Isotta, who pleased him so much.

XLI.

The storytellers say that in the course of things King Marco was talking with Brandina, asking her about the customs, practices, and manners of Irlanda. Hearing their conversation, Queen Isotta became very suspicious, and was afraid that Brandina might tell the king what had happened between Tristano and her. Such spite proves the words of the wise man and creates the proverb which says, "Whoever is guilty thinks he's being stared at." Because of her suspicion, the queen wanted to have Brandina killed.

She summoned two of her most trustworthy squires and commanded that they go in the morning with Brandina to the wilderness of Palalun, and said, "When you are inside the forest, kill her."

The two squires said, "We will obey your command."

At that, Isotta summoned Brandina, and asked her to go to the forest to gather certain herbs for the bath—"and take these two squires with you for company." Brandina said that she was ready to go.

When morning came, she and the two squires mounted and set out on their errand, but when they rode into a very deep valley of the wilderness, one of them said to her, "Look here, Brandina, we have to kill you right now. You may be sure that our lady the queen sent us with you for no other purpose. You have to die right away."

Brandina said, "Did the queen command this?" And the two squires said that she did.

Brandina replied, "That is a great marvel, certainly, for I have loved and

honored the beautiful Isotta, and had more faith in her than in myself."

But the two squires said, "We assure you that you must die. We were sent here with you for no other reason."

Then Brandina began loudly to weep and make a great lament for her life, for she saw she was going to lose it, and she did not know why. Then the other squire said, "Brandina, what has happened that the queen would desert you and want you killed in this way?"

Brandina answered, "In good faith, I do not know at all, for I have loved her loyally with all my heart, more than I love myself, more than any other creature who may be. But I think that something may have happened to me as happened here: know that there were two maidens who left their country, and each one had a lily in her care. One of them lost hers through misfortune, and the one who had kept hers, out of pity lent it to the other, and for that she had to die. I pray you, take these words to my lady the queen, and pray to God for my soul, for I die without guilt or cause. Now do with me as you must and as you will; but know that I die unjustly."

The servants, seeing Brandina so piteous and hearing the lament she made, drew a little aside and took counsel with each other. "You kill her," said one, and the other said, "No, you kill her." And because she had made them feel so sorry for her, neither one of them would kill her or touch her or put a hand on her. They decided between them not to kill her with swords but to take her and tie her to a tree, saying, "We feel so much pity we don't want to put you to the sword." So they tied her to a tree and left her, saying, "The wild beasts will devour her."

Thus they left her, and went back to the queen, saying, "We have done as you commanded; she is dead." And they told the queen what Brandina had said, and about her great lamentations. Then the queen took thought and realized that Brandina had been the most loyal and faithful servant in the world; she began to make the greatest lament and complaint in the world, greatly bewailing and repenting her sin. It was the story she told that made the queen see how loyal and faithful Brandina had been.

Then she commanded the same servants that she had ordered to kill Brandina to go at once for her body and bring it back so that she could see that Brandina was truly dead, and could have her buried with great honor. The servants went back to the wilderness, but they did not find Brandina. They returned to the queen and said that they could not find her anywhere; then day and night the queen wept and lamented.

It is told that when Brandina was left thus tied in the wilderness, she saw that night was coming, and began the loudest wailing in the world. She cried with all her strength to God to guard her soul, for she had lost hope for her body. But by the will of God, who does not desert the faithful Christian who hopes in Him, while Brandina was tied thus and in such trouble, by His will there was passing through the wilderness a knight who heard

her cries, and went toward the sound of them. When Brandina saw the knight, she threw herself on his mercy, and he took pity on her: it was Palamidesso, the Pagan.

He untied her and lifted her up behind him. Then he recognized her, so he said, "What is this? Aren't you Brandina, the servant of Isotta the Blonde whom I saw at the court of King Languis of Irlanda? She has driven me mad, for never have I had one good day since Tristano took her to Cornovaglia."

She answered him, "Truly, knight, I am that Brandina whom you say, servant of Isotta." And then she told him all about the orders given the two squires.

Palamidesso said, "What do you want me to do? Shall I take you to Isotta or to a nunnery that is nearby?"

Brandina replied, "Since I have lost my lady's favor, I know of nothing better than to serve God."

Then Palamidesso took her to the convent, which was a royal one five leagues from Tintoile, and asked that she be cared for there. Then he left and rode toward Tintoile to tell Queen Isotta what had happened. As he was riding, he met the queen with her ladies amusing themselves near a spring. When Palamidesso recognized her, he said, "Lady, lady, if you please, I have a message for you."

The queen drew a little apart from the other ladies, saying, "Knight, what do you have to say?"

Palamidesso answered, "As God will save you, what have you done to Brandina, your good servant who loves you so much, and who has cared for you since you were a little girl?"

Queen Isotta, when she heard Palamidesso's words, could not keep herself from bursting into tears. She said, "Knight, Brandina has gone into such a country that I do not hope ever to see her again."

Then Palamidesso said, "Queen, what would you give to the one who brought Brandina back, alive, unhurt, and healthy?"

The queen answered, "Truly, knight, if you will return Brandina to me alive as you have said, there would be nothing you could ask of me that I would not give."

Palamidesso left at once and rode quickly to the convent, where he found Brandina and said to her, "Brandina, I want to ask you please to come back to your lady the blonde Isotta; know that for your sake she is the most penitent and sorrowful lady in the world."

Brandina replied, "I want to come back with you, since I had rather have trouble and pain from my lady than good treatment from anyone else."

Then Palamidesso had her mounted on a rich palfrey, and they turned back toward Tintoile. When they came before the queen, he said, "Lady,

you see here your good servant Brandina. Now I pray that you will give me the gift you promised."

The queen replied, "Ask, knight, without hesitation."

Then Palamidesso went before King Marco, saluting him courteously and saying, "I am a knight errant called Palamidesso, and I go travelling through many countries, but now in your court I have found the adventure which suits me best, for I have served your lady the queen. For this she should give me a gift, and she has promised it gladly; but because she is obligated to you, she can promise nothing without your consent. Therefore I have come to you, to be sure you agree to the gift she has promised me."

The king said, "Any gift the queen has promised you, I also promise you." And as they spoke thus, the queen said, "I truly promised him."

Then Palamidesso said, "I ask for Queen Isotta, for I have desired her a long time."

At once the king cried, "What? You would take my lady in this way?"

"I surely will," said Palamidesso, "because I had rather you go mad throughout the world than I. For thus have I gone for a long time, needing and thinking of nothing else. I have not done the deeds of arms I should for my honor's sake, I have thought of her so much, and been so tormented by love."

The king was very unhappy about this and said, "Knight, since I promised you the gift, I cannot take it back. But if another knight takes her from you, I don't want to be blamed for it."

Then Palamidesso said, "Certainly, if any knight is bold enough to overcome me, she is his."

He put the queen on a rich palfrey, then left and went on his way. Know that Palamidesso had asked for this gift after dinner, and not without cause, since the human spirit is more agreeable and less melancholy then, because eating and drinking makes man happy. As they rode, the queen was crying continually and praying to God and His mother that they send her their grace, so that they might meet Sir Tristano, who had gone out that morning to hunt.

Meanwhile the king, left full of sorrow, looked over his hall and found there no knight courageous enough to take arms to rescue the queen except one knight errant called Sir Sagris the Small, who had come there for Isotta to treat his wounds: he was already much better. Looking through the court, Sir Sagris saw so many handsome and well-dressed knights who were full of such cowardice that he cursed the day and the hour that kingdom was formed, and at once called for his armor, so that he could arm himself and ride out after Palamidesso. His squires said, "My lord Sagris, how can you go into battle when you are not yet cured of the wounds Brunoro the Black has given you?"

"Still, I must do this," said Sagris, "To disgrace the knights who lead this country."

Then he armed himself, mounted, and rode so swiftly that he caught up with Palamidesso on the edge of the forest of Praugli, near the River Braziano. Then Sir Sagris shouted, "Hail, knight; hail, knight! Either release the queen or make ready to joust."

At that shout, Palamidesso turned his horse and without another word the two knights rode at each other, striking two such great blows that each one broke his lance. Then they put their hands to their sharp swords and began a mighty battle.

Isotta, seeing the battle between the two knights, did not linger, but drew away little by little and soon began to flee; at that she met a local knight who was called Guirlandot. When he saw the queen, he recognized her and asked her where she was going. She answered that she was going to drown herself, and that she was fleeing from Palamidesso, who had taken her from King Marco. The knight took her by her horse's bridle across the river and brought her to his retreat, called the tower of Madrana. He left her in the care of his family, commanding that the queen be served and honored well. Then he took the road to Tintoile, to tell the news to the king.

As Palamidesso and Sagris were fighting, soon Sagris could no longer endure because of the blood he had lost from his previous wounds as well as from those he got from Palamidesso, and he fell to the ground. Palamidesso looked around, and when he could not see Isotta, he was the saddest knight in the world. Quickly he ran in the direction where she had been, and met the knight, to whom he said, "Have you seen a lady who is mine?"

And the knight said, "You do not speak the truth, Palamidesso, when you say she is your lady. But I have taken her to my tower."

Then Palamidesso, in his great sorrow, drew his sword and struck the unarmed man on the head, and killed him. That was one of the worst things Palamidesso ever did, to strike an unarmed knight. Afterwards, he crossed the river and approached the tower, but he found the gates locked and the drawbridge raised. Isotta leaned out a window, calling, "Go away, Palamidesso, for you have had of me all that I promised; now you must hope for nothing more but looking. You ought to know that Sir Tristano will soon be here, and I promise he will give you great trouble and pain."

Palamidesso answered her, "Be certain I won't leave here without you. If Tristano comes and wants to fight with me, I will not fail him."

Then he dismounted and sat down to rest in front of the tower. The queen left the window saying, "Palamidesso, stay as long as you please, I will never care anything about you."

XLII.

When Tristano returned that evening from the hunt, he found the king and the barons all angry and disconsolate. Tristano asked them where all this anger and sorrow came from, and why so suddenly? The king said, "Tristano, after we had eaten a knight errant came, one called Palamidesso, and said that the queen owed him a gift. Suspecting no treachery, I agreed to it, and then he demanded the queen. Hearing this, I tried to give him gold or silver, but he would take nothing. Instead, he took her away.

"In all my court there was no knight brave enough to want to rescue her except Sagris. He went after them, but I don't know what might have happened to him."

Tristano, hearing such news, looked like a madman and went shouting through the court, "Arms! My arms!" and saying, "Oh, Palamidesso, Palamidesso, how happy you must be now that you have gained the treasure you have wanted for so long!" Thus Tristano grieved and made the greatest lament in the world; so great was his sorrow that he could scarcely stand on his feet. He would have shown it even more had he not been afraid of making the king suspicious; because of that he restrained himself somewhat.

He had his arms brought at once, and mounted a good horse. The king prayed that he not ride that night, and instead wait until morning, but Tristano answered him sharply, saying, "Cristo has made you mad for my great sorrow!" and swore he would never return to that kingdom if he did not first find Queen Isotta.

Then he and Governale mounted their horses and left by the shortest way. They soon encountered Sagris, who was returning badly wounded. He told them how Isotta was guarded in that place, how she had fled, and what had happened afterward. Then Tristano set out at great speed, crossing the river and coming to the tower where he found Palamidesso asleep. When Tristano woke him and called him to fight, Palamidesso got up, mounted, and rode to the joust. They struck each other with such vigor that they broke their lances, then they grasped their swords and began a great, cruel battle by the clear light of the moon, exchanging many huge and terrible blows.

Palamidesso fought joyfully, because it gave him the strength of two knights to see Isotta in the tower window, and he was a good and noble knight. You should know that at the same time there were six categories of knights, each kind known for its prowess. The first group was that of Sir Sigurans the Brown, Sir Brunoro the Brown, Sir Tristano, Sir Lancilotto, and the high prince Galeotto. The second was that of Sir Prezzivale lo Galese, Sir Palamidesso, Sir Brunoro the Red, and Amoroldo di Irlanda; the third, of

Amorotto di Gaules, Sir Briobris, and Bordo; the fourth of Sir Calvano, Sir Astore di Mare, and Sagris; the fifth of Sir Ivano, Sir Sagramore, Sir Arecco, and all the other knights errant; and the sixth was of Sir Eris the Sour, the King of Scozia, the King of a Hundred Knights, Meliagans, Pinabello, and all the other foreign knights.

Thus Tristano and Palamidesso fought, finishing the first and second assaults and wounding each other seriously in the third. Isotta, from her balcony, saw that Palamidesso was getting the worst of it and could not last, and well she knew that he would die before he would give her up. So she came between the two knights, saying, "Palamidesso, I ask you for courtesy's sake to grant me a boon. Please take a message for me to Queen Ginevara, and tell her the greatest wish I have is to see her."

Palamidesso said that he would do it gladly, but he knew well that she asked it more to make him leave than to have a message taken. He left at once in great anger and sorrow, because he loved Isotta with all his heart, and thought of nothing else except how he might have her.

Tristano and Isotta went back to the tower, for morning had come and they wanted to rest. During the day, they returned to Tintoile. Inside the palace, Tristano took Isotta by the hand and presented her to King Marco, saying, "My lord, take your lady, and another time don't be so courteous, for it is more trouble to get her back than to give her away." And the king swore to promise no more boons, and especially not to give away his wife, but about other things he would not be miserly.

XLIII.

The true story tells that King Marco was maintaining his court in great joy and delight with his barons when a lady in waiting, a confidante of Queen Isotta, fell in love with Tristano. Her name was Girida, and she said to him, "My lord, I wish to be the lady of your heart, for I love you more than anyone else alive."

But even though she was very beautiful, Tristano did not want to listen to her; on the contrary he said, "What, evil lady, do you think I would love you with an unlawful love?" Tristano showed himself then to be a wise and loyal knight, not wanting to change his condition, or give up the precious thing for the unworthy one, for he knew their worth. He did not want to leave the precious one, that is, Isotta, for any other, because she was the

precious pearl, the virtuous gem, the noblest sapphire. As the panther exudes more perfume than any other beast, and the rose is valued over all other flowers, so the blonde Isotta was above all other women in beauty.

The maiden Girida, seeing that Tristano cared nothing for her love, hated him very much, and was from then on disdainful and hostile toward him. One day she spoke with Adriette, the son of King Marco's sister, who hated Tristano very much for envy of his chivalry, and she said to him that it seemed to her that Tristano loved Queen Isotta with an unlawful love. He was glad of it, and went at once to tell King Marco, but the king said that he would never believe such a thing. Then Adriette said, "I will make you see it clearly."

Then he took six sharp scythes, and when the queen had gone to bed he laid them on the floor of her room. (Know that the king and queen had rooms of their own, and only stayed together one night a week; this they did to increase their delight.) During the first sleep, Tristano came into the room of Isotta the queen, as he usually did, to take solace with her. As he came near, he ran into one of those scythes and made a great gash in his leg. When he felt this, he cried out, "Isotta, we are betrayed! Surely these things have been put here for no other reason than to prove our meetings."

The queen said, "Go back to your room and leave this to me."

Then Tristano left without further words, and the queen got up and purposely wounded her leg a little on one of the scythes, so that the blood Tristano had shed would seem to be hers. Then she began to cry out, so that her cries brought the king and other barons. The king said, "What is the matter, Isotta? Why are you crying?"

And the queen said, "I did not see these scythes, and I hate whoever put them here very much."

And the king, who loved the queen so much, said that either Tristano or Adriette had put them there, for no one else had access to her chamber. "But in good faith," he said, "if I find out which, I will take revenge on him."

Thus life went on, and the king had three fine pavilions raised on the shore, and had announcements sent out that anyone who wanted solace, pleasure, and good times should gather there. Then the king, the queen, Sir Tristano and many other barons and knights went down, where everyone played at chess and backgammon, some fenced and practiced at arms, and they danced and sang and had a good time.

Then two knights errant arrived. One was Amorotto of Gaules, the other was Sir Crausan. Seeing Queen Isotta and becoming aware of her beauty, Amorotto said, "By my faith, this is the most beautiful lady in the world, more beautiful, it seems to me, than the Queen of Organia."

Crausan answered Amorotto, "Sire, you were mistaken before, or love has bound you, for there is a hundred times more beauty in Queen Isotta than in the Queen of Organia."

Then Amorotto said, "Crausan, shall we find out how well these men of Cornovaglia can joust? And this Sir Tristano, we'll find out if he is as bold as they say."

Then, without further words, they drew some distance apart from the pavilions and called out, "A joust, a joust!" as was the custom. Then King Marco had Adriette and another knight arm themselves, and sent them to the joust, but the two Cornish knights could not endure at all against the two knights errant. Then the king sent a dozen knights against them at once, but all were beaten: some killed, some wounded. At this, Tristano and Isotta had the biggest laugh in the world, and they much reproved the king, saying that he had brought disgrace on the country sending more than one knight against one other, and that it was not right to do that.

At that, the king commanded Tristano to arm himself and go to joust, but Tristano did not want to at all, to ride against knights so fatigued and exhausted. Still, the king said, "I command you: you hold your knighthood from me."

Tristano said, "Truly, I would not have been made a knight in this country for half of Liones, so that I would not have to be called Tristano of Cornovaglia."

But he armed himself, and rode against Amorotto. They challenged each other, and at the lowering of lances exchanged two great blows; Amorotto broke his lance against Tristano, but Tristano knocked him off his horse and afterwards, in another encounter, he sent Crausan dead to the ground. Then Amorotto came forward and asked Tristano for another exchange or two with swords, but Tristano did not want this at all. He refused, out of courtesy, because he saw that the other knight was worn out and exhausted and that there would be no valor in it. But Amorotto was disgusted, saying, "By my faith, I realize now that you are Tristano, but you aren't the sort of knight others have said you are, nor the sort you first appeared to be."

Then Tristano said, "Amorotto, if you would be pleased to stay here, we will have this knight buried with great honor; afterwards, I will have one exchange or two with you, or as many as you like, at your good pleasure."

Amorotto, who was a very proud man, said, "Before I would spend a night in this country, or let my companion be buried here, I would rather die, for you are the most cowardly people in the world."

Then he lifted Crausan's body across his horse, and departed, riding until he came to an abbey where he had the dead man buried, then he went on his way.

When he reached the great wilderness, he met a knight and a lady, and the lady wore around her neck a beautiful ivory horn, chased with fine gold and silver. Amorotto asked the knight what horn that was, and the knight, who was called Tramondo Ughiere, said that the horn had been sent by Fata Morgana to King Artù, for by the powers of this horn one could find

out whether one's lady were loyal or disloyal, and which ones sinned against their husbands. The horn was enchanted in such a way that if it were filled with wine and held to the lips of a lady who had been false to her husband, by no effort in the world could she swallow anything from it, but her hand would tremble so much that the wine would spill on her breast; a loyal lady, though, could drink as much as she liked.

"By my faith," said Amorotto, "you will not take this horn to King Artù. Rather I would have you take it to King Marco of Cornovaglia, for it seems to me that Queen Isotta is guiltier than Queen Ginevara."

But the knight replied, "I would not for anything betray my trust."

And Amorotto: "If you won't do it, truly I will challenge you to joust."

Then the two knights rode against each other, but Amorotto, who was stronger, sent the other knight off his horse to the ground, then put his hand to his sword, saying, "Either you take this horn to King Marco, and tell him about its powers, or I will cut off your head!"

So the knight swore he would do it. Then he and the lady rode out of their way and went to the city of Tintoile. Entering the palace, they came before King Marco and presented him with the horn as a gift from Amorotto of Gaules, and told him what its power was. The king was glad to have it. He summoned all the knights and barons to gather at the palace, and ladies and married damsels, and told them about the power of the horn. Then he had it filled with unwatered wine and commanded Queen Isotta to be the first to drink. The queen said, "By my faith, I will not drink, for this horn was made to spite a certain lady and no one else, and I don't want it to harm me. The enchantment on this horn could do me injury and other ladies as well."

But the king said, "Lady, your words are worth nothing, for by my faith, you will hold this horn and drink from it."

Then the queen, seeing that she could do nothing else, took the horn and brought it to her mouth, but at that point her hand shook, and in no way could she swallow; all the wine was spilled on her breast. Then the king had the horn given to the other ladies, but of the 686 only thirteen proved loyal, and these not by their own desires; they had fully as much will as the others, but they had not been invited, so they remained true.

I believe that such a thing happened in this country because the ladies were all such drunkards, liars, and gluttons, and were so fond of clothes, and more lecherous than other ladies. The men were handsome but cowardly, unskilled at arms and without valor, but they were very arrogant and greedy.

When he had seen this proof, King Marco said, "I command that the queen and all the other ladies here be seized, and that they be stripped and burnt as false and lying women."

Then Dinasso, the head seneschal, who was a great friend of Tristano, said, "My lord, it does not seem just to me that our ladies be burnt because

of an enchanted horn which was made on purpose to destroy some lady by great wrong and falseness. We don't want to have faith or belief in the enchantments that come out of Longres, which are all false and falsely made. If you want to bring judgement against your own lady, who is so good, chaste, beautiful, and loyal, just to satisfy King Artù, have her burnt; we care nothing for that. For my part, though, I give you this advice: our ladies should not be blamed because of a false enchantress, but rather should be honored as the good and loyal ladies they are. But Queen Isotta, even though she is not guilty, since it is for your pleasure and delight, let her be burnt."

The king then, full of pride, said, "Sir Dinasso, if you would have it that your ladies are so loyal, I say that mine is more loyal, more honest, and better; and it will be a great sorrow to you that you were ever born in this country. It is for the goodness of my lady the queen that I pardon all the others."

From then on, Tristano hated Amorotto bitterly, saying that he would find him wherever he was, and no longer would Amorotto lack combat with swords, but would get a lot more than he wanted.

XLIV.

The true story tells and says that King Marco went on for a time, suspecting Tristano more one day than the next, all because of evil rumors. For, in truth, the king had been told in secret many times about how things were with Tristano and Isotta, and was only made more suspicious by the plots of the maiden Girida and Adriette. Because he was so suspicious, he ordered that no knight or baron might dare enter the queen's chamber without his permission or, indeed, without his being there himself.

Tristano was wise enough to know that the commandment was meant for him more than for any other, and then he became even more inflamed with love for the queen than he had been before, because the more a perfect love is crossed, the more it is inflamed, and the more uncertain it is, the more and greater is the delight; the more it is forced into secrecy, the more perfect it becomes. Thus it happened with Sir Tristano that when his love was the more troubled, he was the more ardent for it, and he searched for any and every way that he might speak with Queen Isotta. He could no longer go through the door of her room, so he went by way of a tree in the garden whose branches reached over her balcony. He went so often that

the false Lady Girida spied him; at once she told Adriette, and he went to let King Marco know.

When the king heard this, he pretended not to believe it. Still, he had thirty knights armed, and took them with him to Queen Isotta's chamber. When Brandina, who was standing guard, saw him, she called at once to Tristano, who got up dressed in his silken tunic, wrapped a camel's hair cloak around his arm, and came out of the chamber, his naked sword in hand. The king, when he saw Tristano, struck him a hard blow on the hand he had wrapped in the cloak, but Tristano gave him such a heavy blow with the flat of his sword that he made him fall stunned to the ground. Afterwards, he struck Adriette in the face, giving him a serious wound, and he wounded two more knights, so that the rest fled out of fear.

Having done this, Tristano went back to his own palace, where he found four knights errant who had come on purpose to find him: one was Sagramorre the Orange, another Sagris, the third was Lionello and the fourth Agravano.

King Marco, coming to himself, had the beautiful Isotta seized, and had her imprisoned in the great tower of the city, and had the keys then brought to him. When Tristano found out what had happened, that the queen had been thus locked away, and that he could neither see her nor speak with her, he was the saddest man in the world. He swore that he would never come out of his palace until he had reason to believe he could see the beautiful Isotta, and always he was in great sorrow and mourning. He was in this torment and suffering a full thirty-six days, becoming confused because of his sorrow, scarcely eating or drinking. Then suddenly he became very sick, so that he was put to bed, and no doctor knew how to give him aid or comfort.

The king, hearing that Tristano was so ill, had himself attended by many barons and went to visit him. When he was beside the bed, he said to Tristano, "How do you feel?"

And Tristano answered and said, "My uncle, I feel so troubled that I don't want to eat or drink, and I can find no one who knows how to cure me."

The king said, "Tristano, your thoughts are surely playing you false, that you expect help from a place from which nothing will come. You will have to comfort yourself in some other way."

Sir Tristano answered, saying, "If I have no help, I will surely die. If I wish for the counsel of your lady Isotta, there is nothing wrong in that, for she knows my nature and my needs better than anyone else."

Then the king made no answer, except to tell Tristano to take comfort. Tristano, left in so much sorrow, did not cease to lament and weep. He said to himself, "If I could only speak one time with my beautiful Isotta, I know I would be cured."

Then he wrote a letter in his own hand, a few words, and gave it to Governale, asking that he please arrange to send it to the tower where Isotta was

imprisoned. Governale did so, for he knew the tower so well that cleverly he could slip it in through a tiny opening. The queen, seeing that letter, opened it to see and to read what it said. The letter said exactly this:

XLV.

Oh, sorrowful, wretched me, I am so unfortunate!
Alas cruel fortune, who has so abased Tristano!
Oh, sweet comfort, how you have abandoned me!
I can find no aid nor message by which I may reveal the cruel pain I bear;
Thus I send this letter to you, my sweet love, who has so inflamed me;
That, you know, I must soon die if you do not help me,
And if your beautiful face is kept hidden from me.
And so I pray that your comfort soon will be sent to me,
If there is any way you can give it.
Now comfort yourself, sweet queen, and don't delay,
If you see any way in which I might be consoled.
Sweet my love, I pray that you will not neglect me;
And only of you, rose,
I think, and how I might be with you,
So that I would be comforted at once."

When Isotta read that letter, she was very sad, more for the sorrow she knew Tristano had than for her own, even though she was in prison. Then soon she sharpened her thoughts one way and another; in short, she spoke to Brandina, and prayed her dearly to go to Tristano, and arrange it to bring him in some way or another so it would not be known. Brandina went to Tristano and dressed him like a lady who had come from strange and distant parts, and that evening brought him to the tower where the beautiful Isotta lived imprisoned. When the king saw her, he asked who she was, and Brandina replied, "She is a lady who has come from Irlanda because she wishes to speak to Queen Isotta."

Then the king gave Brandina the keys, and she led Tristano inside. And when the two courtly lovers saw each other, courteously and sweetly they made the greatest celebration and rejoicing in the world. That night they

rested in a rich and noble bed, and Isotta, who was a fine doctor, cured Tristano and soothed his troubled mind at the same time, and gave him life and happiness. Tristano would have stayed on like that, if the false maiden Girida had not found him out and told the king. The king had eighty knights armed, who went at once to the tower and seized Tristano, who had no chance to defend himself because he did not have his sword with him. Adriette had Tristano and Isotta bound and afterwards, in the morning, had them brought before King Marco. When he saw them, he was the saddest king in the world, saying to himself, "Now I am deeply disgraced, and finally I see that these two have brought me much shame." Then he spoke, "Be certain that I must at once take high vengeance for this."

He sentenced Tristano to be beheaded, and the queen to be given to beggars, that is, lepers, so that no other person would ever have desire or reason to have anything to do with her. At that point, Adriette and many other knights and foot soldiers armed themselves and went out of the city, leading Tristano and Isotta to the shore, there where the sentences were to be carried out. Then the good and faithful Governale and the four friendly knights errant armed themselves and went secretly to the edge of the sea to rescue Tristano from death.

Adriette and his company rode to carry out the sentence, and half of them led Isotta, and the other half led Tristano, and when Tristano saw that the beautiful Isotta was leaving him, his sorrow was so great he nearly died. In a little while Tristano grew proud in his heart and, gathering all his strength and power he gave such a great wrench that he burst all the bonds that tied him; he dashed forward and took a sword from someone's side, striking that one so hard that he sent him dead to the earth with the blow, and then he killed a second and a third. As the knights gathered, Tristano did not wait for them, but dashed into a ruined chapel there by the side of the sea. Seeing that he was in danger and could not stay there, he threw himself into the water and swam more than three leagues, coming to rest on a little rock in the middle of the sea.

The knights who had followed him dismounted, thinking to find him inside the chapel, but he was not there. They they said, "Surely he must be drowned." They returned to King Marco and told him that they had given the queen to the beggars and lepers, and that Tristano was drowned in the sea. Then the king closed himself in his room and said, "Now the noblest and bravest knight in the world is dead, and the most beautiful lady who ever lived in this world is disgraced." Thus he stayed for more than thirty days and did not come out of his room. But afterwards, when he would find out that they were alive and how it had gone he would be somewhat happier, as you will hear soon.

The story tells that Governale and the knights errant, waiting by the shore, saw that Tristano was not brought to justice, marvelled greatly at it, and

then left the beach. And as the queen was given to the lepers, that is, as she was set down among them, she ran quickly into a room that was there and closed herself in as well as she could, barring the place where she was so tightly that no one could get in to her by any way. Governale arrived there and called aloud to her, so that she knew him by his voice. She said, "Tell me the truth, now, how is Sir Tristano? I do not want to live any longer if he is dead, and if I have lost him, I will not stay alive!"

At once Governale answered, "Isotta, truly Tristano was not brought to justice at the appointed place, so we are going to find out what happened."

Then Isotta opened the door, and Governale took her on his horse so they could go searching along the shore. When they reached the ruined chapel, they found that much blood had been spilled there, and they were very worried about it. But Tristano, looking toward the shore and recognizing them, began to wave his sword. Sagramore was looking that way just then, and when he saw the sword waving so hard, he showed it to his companions. Then Tristano dove into the sea and swam, and so strove that he came to the shore; when he saw Isotta and found out what had happened, he became happy and joyful. Then Governale gave Tristano armor, a sword, and a horse: Tristano was delighted to see his sword and all his other armor, and said well that by his faith, he would yet make what had been done cost them dear.

Then they went on their way and rode until they came to the house of a vavasor, who showed them great honor and gave Isotta many clothes of wool and linen, and a noble palfrey. In the morning, Tristano thanked the vavasor very much, and they went on. Then Tristano said, "Isotta, what do you think we should do? Should we go to Liones or to some other country?"

Isotta said, "Tristano, because of what has just happened to us, I would be ashamed to go to a country where I am known."

So Tristano said, "Then we will go to a tower I know of on the border between Cornovaglia and Liones. It is a lovely place, and is known as the Tower of the Wise Maiden, or truly of Enchantment."[19]

Isotta agreed to this, and Tristano said to the four knights, "My lords, I must go on to a place where you cannot accompany me, therefore I recommend you to God. I am always yours to command."

Then they took leave of each other, and Tristano and Isotta rode through the wasteland until they came to the tower. When they had rested there a little, Governale rode to the castle of Orduale Besco, three leagues away, and bought food to eat and other necessary things. When he was returning, he encountered Brandina, who was searching for him, and he took her with him. When Tristano and Isotta saw Brandina, they were very happy about it. Governale prepared their supper and Brandina made them a place to rest, and when they had eaten they went to their beautiful bed to amuse themselves.

When the next day came, Tristano and Governale went hunting and returned after nones with a catch of many wild beasts; and when Tristano and Isotta had eaten, for pleasure they began to play chess. Thus the two lovers lived for seventy-five days.

Then came a night when Tristano had a bad dream: that a stag gave him two wounds, and it seemed that he could not be cured of the one, so great was the pain of the other.

When they got up that morning, Tristano and Governale went hunting according to their custom, but even though they hunted all morning and into the afternoon, they took nothing, and Tristano grew melancholy about it. At that point, he dismounted, and gave his horse to Governale to watch. He went to the crest of a nearby hill, here to rest; in his melancholy, he went to sleep; he felt so much sorrow, and did not himself know where it was coming from. Governale stayed quietly not far away, watching the horse, with many brachets and hounds. Now the story stops speaking of Tristano, and we will tell about King Marco of Cornovaglia.

XLVI.

A good four months had passed after the departure of Tristano and Queen Isotta before King Marco found out that they had escaped, and were together, alive and well; still, he could not find out where they were living. Then he was the saddest, most sorrowful king in the world, saying, "Alas, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful Isotta! Gracious queen! My sweet lady! Now you live with your lover Tristano in great pleasure and delight. Now I know that you are finding solace while I am here lamenting my sorrow, for it has happened to me as it happens always, that the one who wants everything loses everything. Now I am brought to the point that I would be content with your friendship, and Tristano's, if I could speak to you one time in a month. I would like to be anywhere but here, if I could be with you, my sweet, beautiful lady; Tristano might wear the crown and be king in Cornovaglia.

"But the thing is done; words are worth nothing—though I wish they had value—for this wisdom I've gained after the act is worth nothing to me, and I am sad that I did not gain it before. For truly if I had forseen that doing what I did would give me neither rest nor peace, I would not have cast off my lady, but would have locked her in a fine chamber. Oh, lovely queen, you are with your noble lover and your dear love and you are glorified, and I am sorrowful and sad; I cannot be consoled!"

He did not know where Tristano and Isotta were living, but he thought they might have gone to the kingdom of Longres. The day came when the king, to distract himself, went out hunting with a great company of barons and knights. Coming to the great wilderness of Dirlantes, they hunted through the countryside for six days, then on the seventh came near the tower where Tristano was living with the blonde Isotta.

The king and his barons had no idea they were living there. The king met a few shepherds and asked them, "Who lives in this place?" And they answered, "A handsome knight lives here now, and he has a beautiful lady as his companion."

Then the king said quickly to his barons, "By my faith, I believe my nephew Tristano is in this tower."

The shepherds said, "Truly, sire, we don't know his name; he is a fine-looking knight. But his attendant, we have heard him called by the name Governale—the lady also calls him Governale."

Then the king called his knights to him and said, "My lords, what do you think we should do?" He told them what the shepherds had said, then he stopped and said that he wanted to go back to Tintoile and arm all of his knights, and come back for the beautiful Isotta.

Then the shepherds spoke in good faith and said, "We are sorry that the lord is not at home, for surely he is a courteous knight and would show you great honor."

When the king heard their words he said, "What? Is the lord not in the tower now?"

And the shepherds answered, "No, truly, for every morning he goes hunting and never returns until after nones. There is no one in the tower but the lady and her maiden."

The king was delighted with those words. He went inside with his companions, and they all went in with lances ready. He ordered them that if they did not meet Tristano each one should be brave and ardent and fearless: "But if Tristano comes at us, or if we meet him in the way, each one must think how he can best escape or turn back; we will say that we were hunting, and were not looking for him."

Then they entered the tower, and the king had Adriette go up with twelve other knights. Finding the beautiful Isotta, they took her and set her on a rich palfrey; they took Brandina as well, and returned to Tintoile at a great pace. When they reached the palace, the king had the queen imprisoned in a big, luxurious chamber, locking her in with three keys; but still he saw that she lacked nothing for her comfort, and he went to speak with her whenever he pleased. Then the king sent out a proclamation that no one should dare approach the tower, and that anyone who remembered Tristano would have his head cut off: this he declared as the penalty.

XLVII.

The masters of the story tell that the moment Isotta was captured, Tristano was sleeping on the hilltop. As he was sleeping there a boy on horseback came by and, when he saw Tristano, recognized him as the one who had killed his father Antonio in the tournament in Irlanda. The boy dismounted, and when he was on foot he took his Syrian bow and fitted a poisoned arrow in it, then he cried, "Knight, beware of me!"

As Tristano awoke, the young man shot the arrow into his left arm, making a wound that caused Tristano great pain. When he saw that the one who had wounded him was a boy and not a knight, he did not want to strike with his sword, but rather dashed at him and grabbed his arm, throwing him to the ground with such force and such anger that he cracked his head so that his brains showed. Then he went to find Governale, and told him what had happened, saying, "This wound is giving me a lot of pain."

Governale said, "Don't worry about it. We'll mount at once and go back to Isotta. She'll soon cure you."

But Tristano said, "Governale, I'm worried we may find worse news, because of the dream I had last night."

Then they rode to the tower, and when they arrived they saw that the field outside was all marked by horses' hooves, and neither Isotta nor Brandina was in the tower.

Then, like the great heat that dries the leaves and the great wind that blows them to the ground, so the great sorrow and death-dealing news dried up in Tristano all strength and sensation, and with great force sent him to earth, where he fell like a dead body.

When he found out from the shepherds that King Marco had taken the queen, all five senses deserted him and he felt nothing, lying there like that for half an hour. When he finally came to himself he spoke in a soft, weak voice, saying, "Oh, my heart, who has taken you from me? Oh, hope of my thoughts, my repose, hope of my life! I have received a mortal blow, and if I cannot see you, I will be unconsolable forever!" And all that night Tristano never stopped lamenting.

Afterwards, at dawn, he summoned Governale to disarm him, for he had lost so much strength that he could scarcely mount his horse. Then they rode toward the city of Tintoile, and Tristano rode weeping, so the neck of Auferrante was bathed in tears. Governale tried to comfort him, but Tristano did not want to be comforted, he was so overflowing with sorrow. More than five times he fell off his horse, and it was with great difficulty that Governale helped him remount.

When they rode out of the wilderness, they met a damsel who was com-

ing from the castle at Cornasin. When she saw Tristano, she did him great honor, and Tristano said, "Lady, for courtesy's sake, will you carry a message from me to Brandina, and tell her to come speak with me?"

The damsel replied, "Certainly, sire; I will do it gladly." Then she went to the city where she found Brandina and delivered the message.

Brandina got on a horse and was soon beside Tristano; finding themselves together, they made the greatest lament in the world, and Brandina said, "Alas, sire, how pale you are! And how worn and weak you look!"

Sir Tristano answered and said, "Brandina, it is a great marvel that I am still alive, for I have borne the greatest sorrow and the greatest torment, and the pain in my heart is so great that little by little I am abandoning life. And I have been wounded in the arm by a poisoned arrow which torments me more and more, and I cannot find anyone to cure me; therefore I beg of you some counsel or remedy."

Brandina replied, "I do not know what counsel I can give you, or what comfort. The reason is that I cannot see or speak to Isotta in any way. And for the time being her love and comfort are forbidden to you. Thus I advise you that because of your great need you go now to Petitta Brettagna, because except for Isotta there is not a damsel in the world who knows more about medicine than the king's daughter there. You could be cured there, and come back afterward, when it may happen that in so great a time, Isotta will have been let out of prison."

Tristano replied, "Brandina, how can I go to a faraway land looking for a cure when I am so weak I am nearly dead and, as you see, I am not strong enough to ride?"

Brandina thought a little, then said, "Tristano, I know the king's nature, and thus I advise you this much: I counsel you to send to him and make humble supplication that he grant you grace and allow you to stay in the castle at Cornasin until your wound is healed. Then I will treat you with medicine as I have seen my lady Isotta do in Irlanda. After a while, the king's heart will be softened toward you; and I, if I can, will speak with Isotta and she will give me advice about you. I think this will work."

Then Sir Tristano said, "Brandina, you speak fair words."

Brandina returned to Tintoile, and Tristano went straight to the castle at Cornasin where he wrote a letter, or had Governale write it, and sent it to King Marco. When Governale went into the city, all the people bowed to him, but no one dared ask about Tristano for fear of the ban. When Governale reached the palace to go before the king, the king summoned him to his chamber where he was attended only by Brandina. Then Governale threw himself at his feet and began to make the greatest lament in the world, kissing his feet and hands and saying, "Sire, I must tell you that your nephew, the son of King Meliadus, who for love of you freed you from the Irish yoke, is near death. His end will come soon, for there is no way he can escape.

It's because he was wounded the other day by a poisoned arrow, although Tristano killed the one who hurt him."

The king spoke and said, "If Tristano dies, I will be most contented and happy about it, and I will have him buried with great honor."

Then Governale gave him the letter, and the king opened it to find out what it said. The letter's contents were this:

XLVIII.

To his father and lord, with a thousand entreaties, your servant Tristano sends to you imploring. As God the father pardoned all the generations of humans for the primal sin, I pray that you will pardon me the crime I stand falsely accused of. You have raised me to noble heights in my life; now I entreat you as I die. I have been wounded in the left arm by a poisoned arrow, and I can find neither rest nor peace, so that I am nearly dead. Thus I beg of you for courtesy's sake, and by the honor of you and your crown, and the great worth of your kingdom, that you give me leave to rest in the castle at Cornasin until I am in a better state, or until I am a little mended. If I get well, though I don't believe I will, I will go to Liones and never come again to Cornovaglia."

When the king had read this letter, he began to sigh deeply, and said to Governale, "Is this the truth, that Tristano is so afflicted, and is as ill as he says in this letter?"

Governale replied, "Sire, I swear to you by everything I hold dear that Tristano is at death's door." And he told the king how it had happened that Tristano had been wounded, and what Tristano had done to the one who wounded him.

Then the king sent Tristano permission to stay in the castle at Cornasin while he was recovering, and to go wherever he pleased, except that he was not to come within a hundred feet of the city gates or walls. Then he asked Brandina to go and treat him and examine him as best she could. She could bring him medicine, but she could not bring him his best doctor.

Then Brandina and Governale returned to Tristano, and delivered their message, and Brandina began to treat Tristano the best ways she knew, so that in thirty days she had cured and healed the wound. That is, it seemed to be cured, but because she was not well trained a little of the poison remained inside; she needed better advice than she had had.

Still, Tristano was better, and every morning he rode his palfrey near the city, to gaze at the tower where he knew Isotta the blonde lived imprisoned for love of him. Then he would make a lament, so humble and so pitiful that it was a great sorrow to hear. In his lament he said, "Alas, beautiful, beautiful Isotta, heart of my body, hope and sweetness of my delight, will I ever see you again? Alas, will we ever speak together again at our pleasure?"

In such words he brought out his great sorrow and his great suffering, so that he brought to mind again all his good memories, then he would go back to the castle any way his palfrey would carry him, for he was not aware of anything, so great was the sadness and dole he had inside.

xlix.

One morning Tristano turned toward the city of Tintoile and, looking toward the tower in which Isotta was imprisoned and thinking how he could not see her, became as unconscious as a madman. Then along the way there came a knight errant, who encountered Tristano in this state near a stone. This knight greeted Tristano courteously once, then twice, but Tristano, who was all wrapped up in noble thoughts, neither heard him nor understood him. The knight took his not responding as a great insult, so he took the ring of Tristano's bridle and pulled him back, and with that jolt, Tristano came to himself and said, "Knight, you're too arrogant to push my horse! By my faith, if I were armed, I would bring you to such repentance that you would never forget it."

Then the knight said, "Now I see that I was well advised that in this country are the most cowardly and insulting people in the world. Three times I saluted you, but you would not take the trouble to answer me. By my faith, if you were not unarmed, I would surely shame and dishonor you."

Tristano began to smile a little, and said, "Since you have gratified your honor by your words, what do you have to do with my words or my deeds? But I tell you this: if you will wait here while I go to arm myself, I will show you immediately by force of arms that there are bold and loyal knights in this country."

Then the knight stopped and said, "Why don't you just do it? Why not commit suicide? Go; do it quickly. I will wait for you; I will not move from this next stone."

Then Tristano rode back to the castle and armed himself quickly, mounted,

and rode back to the knight. When he reached him, he saluted courteously and said, "Sir knight, you know there is not time to finish our battle, therefore I pray that you will come to rest at my castle, and in the morning we will fight."

The knight replied, "I have no need of rest now. But for courtesy's sake, tell me one thing: if in that castle there lives a knight who is called Sir Tristano?"

Tristano replied, "Noble sir, I will tell you the truth. I saw him ride out this morning very downcast."

And the knight said, "What? Is Queen Isotta not in the city?" As if to say, "How could Tristano be downcast when Isotta is near him?"

At this point, Tristano grew angry, saying, "Knight, why do you speak of Queen Isotta?"

The knight answered, "That I remember her and mention her has nothing to do with you; you are no priest to whom I would confess my sins."

Tristano said, "Where have you ever seen Queen Isotta, that you mention her so much?"

And the knight answered, "I don't know where I may have seen her, but I love her very much and with a good heart."

At these words Tristano turned pale, saying, "Knight, let there be no more words between us. Take the field at your pleasure, because I challenge you."

At that point a townsman went to King Marco and told how Tristano had begun a battle with the knight errant near the stone; and the king and all his barons and knights went at once to the meadow to watch.

When the two knights had saluted, they rode apart from each other. Coming together to strike with their lances they gave each other two such great blows that the lances shattered, and the horses passed each other. The knights had struck each other on the shields and the visors with such great strength that they broke their saddle girths and breastbands and sent each other to earth, saddles and all, lying there stunned while their horses fell dead beside them.

Tristano was the first to get to his feet. When he saw that his good horse was dead, he was very sorry about it; still he summoned his opponent back to the fight. The knight got up at once, and they put their hands to their swords and began a cruel battle. They gave each other great, heavy blows, so that the noise of them resounded everywhere; in a little while their shields lay in pieces on the ground, and most of their armor was cut and bent.

In the second assault their helmets were ruined and broken and their flesh was all discolored: each one was bleeding badly. King Marco and his barons marvelled greatly at the two knights, seeing how well they did; they praised them as much as they knew how.

In the third assault, each one was badly wounded, and their blood flowed onto the ground, turning it red. After that, the knights rested from the third assault, and when they had rested a little they began their cruel battle again,

each one fighting even more fiercely, for each one had rather die than be the loser. Their visors had been knocked to the ground, so that each could see the other's face, and much they wondered at each other's strength; still they had no shields on their arms.

At that point the knight drew a little apart, saying to Tristano, "Sir, by my faith, we have fought so much that we are nearly dead. Thus, if it pleases you, I would like to know your name, and I will tell you mine. It is right that we should know each other's names, because if only one of us escapes alive, at least he will know who he has killed."

But Tristano said, "Knight, in no way can you find out my name, and I care nothing about yours, unless you first tell me why you asked about Queen Isotta."

The knight said to Sir Tristano, "If I could believe that you were such a loyal friend of Sir Tristano that you held his honor perfectly dear, I would surely tell you."

Tristano replied at once, saying, "Knight, by my faith, I believe I am the best friend Tristano has in this world."

And the knight said, "That, truly, I do not believe, because Tristano has a good and loyal friend in the land of Longres, one he has never seen, who loves him as much as he loves himself, or more, for love of chivalry. I am he who loves Sir Tristano, for the sake of his great worth and his good name, and because I love Sir Tristano I love Queen Isotta as if she were my blood sister. Know, knight, that I am called Lancilotto, son of King Bando of Benoich, and I have left the kingdom and the court of King Artù only to look for Tristano, and I am determined never to go back until I have seen him."

When Tristano realized that this was Lancilotto, the one he so much wanted to see, he was very happy about it. At once he took his sword by its point and held it out to Lancilotto, saying "Noble Sir Lancilotto, I am your servant Tristano, who loves you with all his heart."

Then Lancilotto, understanding that this was Tristano, cared no more for his sword's honor, but threw it away along with his helmet and shield, and they kissed and embraced each other more than a hundred times, and each insisted that the other had won the battle.

King Marco, having watched the cruel battle, and now seeing the knights honor each other so greatly, marvelled much about it with his barons. He sent to find out who the noble knight might be, and when he found out that it was Lancilotto, son of Bando of Benoich, the falcon and prize of the good knights errant, he surrounded himself with many of his barons and knights and approached the place where the pair had been fighting. He embraced Lancilotto, showing him great joy and honor, and invited him into the city.

But Lancilotto, who knew everything that had happened because Tristano

had told him, said, "My lord, one of the great desires I have had in this world is to see you and deliver the greetings that King Artù and Queen Ginevara have sent to you through me. And doubly do they recommend Tristano to you, as much as they do themselves, but I have heard here such news that I do not care to come into your city. Rather I will return to court, and take Tristano with me."

Then the king answered and said, "I miss Tristano very, very much, but he has greatly offended me and tarnished my honor."

Lancilotto said, "My lord, you don't want to believe those who speak evil, who out of envy would like to see all noble knights dead or disgraced. I am sure Sir Tristano would do nothing except what he justly ought to do. It is envy that has set others against him, and for courtesy's sake, and for love of me and the service I can do your high lordship, I beg you, my good lord, to offer peace, if it please you, to Sir Tristano, and let Isotta out of prison so she can cure our wounds."

The king, considering Lancilotto's great power, pardoned Sir Tristano, and to seal the peace between them gave him his good destrier, Passabrunello, who was the best horse in the world, and to Lancilotto he gave another, handsome and fine, almost as good. Then he had Isotta the Blonde let out of prison.

Meeting at the great palace, Isotta made Lancilotto the greatest honor in the world; she treated their wounds, and they were soon cured. Now that they were all well and free, the beautiful Isotta planned a great feast at the Palagio del Giardino, one league outside the city, toward the mountains. When the king and queen, Lancilotto and Tristano, and many other ladies and barons reached the palace, they went to eat at many feast tables, and when they were done, the tables were removed. Then Isotta and Lancilotto sang a sonnet that Lancilotto had made for Queen Ginevara, and King Marco, hearing the words, was somewhat comforted, saying, "Tristano is not the only lover; the wisest men can lose their good sense." He was glad to find out that King Artù kept him company in such matters.

After they had rested a while, the king, along with other barons and knights, mounted and rode back to Tintoile. At that point, Tristano and Isotta went to lie down in a beautiful chamber, and here they restored to each other the time they had been kept apart. But King Marco held them too well in his heart: when he reached the city and saw that Queen Isotta had not returned, he was consumed with worry. Then he planned a great treason, and he had Underigo his seneschal and eighty knights arm themselves, and ordered them to go to the Palagio del Giardino and seize Isotta and Tristano, saying that if anyone tried to prevent it, they should strike him fiercely.

Then they rode to the palace, but Brandina, becoming aware of their approach, went to call Lancilotto and told him of their plight. Lancilotto armed

himself quickly and met them in the great hall; facing them, he said, "What do you want? Who are you looking for?"

At once, some of them arrogantly drew their swords against Lancilotto; Lancilotto drew his, and there began a great battle. Brandina quickly ran from the room and told Tristano what was happening, then Tristano took his shield and helmet and sword at once—because of his hurry, he took no other arms—and found that Lancilotto had already killed six knights.

Tristano joined him, and well he seemed like a lion among beasts, so that in a short time, between the two of them, they had scattered or killed all who tried to pit themselves against them. When King Marco found out what had happened, he was very fearful; he sent out a clever proclamation that Underigo and the other knights who had attacked Lancilotto, along with those who had been killed, must take the loss, and that those who escaped were banished from the kingdom, on forfeit of their lives. In the morning, he mounted and rode to the palace with twenty unarmed knights. Brandina saw them coming and warned Tristano, who got up from beside Isotta and went to lie down by Lancilotto. When the king entered the hall he met Governale and asked for Lancilotto, and Governale told him, "They aren't up yet."

At that point, he led the king into a chamber where they found Lancilotto and Tristano in each other's arms, seeming to be asleep. Then the king lost his suspicions and called to them, and they acted as though they were just waking up, and put on their silken robes. Then Lancilotto said, "King Marco, I might much complain of you, for first you invite me, then you try to have me killed."

Then the king made the greatest vows in the world to Lancilotto that he knew nothing about it. And Tristano said to Lancilotto, "I'm sure the king knew nothing about it. He is telling us the truth, so we will have to excuse him. But he errs in one thing: he ought to send for the queen at once, for I am sure she was very frightened by the noise of the battle, and we have not yet heard anything from her."

Then the king went to the queen's chamber, where he found her surrounded by many ladies, and very pale; it would be easy to believe, because of the sweet struggle between Tristano and her, that they did not willingly go to bed with each other.

The king greeted her courteously, but at first she did not condescend to respond. Then she said, "An evil journey he made who first brought word that I was to come to Cornovaglia, for well I see that there is little faith in you, and that you scarcely love me, that at such an hour you send for me!"

Then they all mounted, and the king and the queen, Lancilotto and Tristano, and all the other people returned to the city. After Lancilotto had stayed thirty days, he took leave and returned to the city of Camellotto, for at all times his will and his desire was to solace himself with Queen

Ginevara as Sir Tristano had done with the blonde Isotta.

Now the story stops telling about King Marco and Tristano, and we will tell about Sir Lancilotto, and how he brought Queen Ginevara to Gioiosa Guardia.

I.

The true story tells that when Lancilotto returned to the court of King Artù, he was received with great honor. Everyone asked him about Sir Tristano, and he said all that was suitable to say of such a high baron. After a few days, King Artù had a hunt proclaimed, saying that all the barons were to come with him into the wilderness of Andernantes. Lancilotto, who wanted so much to be with Queen Ginevara, said, "My lord, I am tired from the trip to Cornovaglia, which has so exhausted me that hunting doesn't appeal to me just now."

And the king said, "Very well; you may stay behind."

These words were overheard by a scurrilous knight who was called Sir Daniello, who was the brother of Sir Dinadano and the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat, who then secretly said to the king, "My lord, Lancilotto's staying behind will lead to great dishonor for you, as it usually has before."

At those words the king became very thoughtful and grave, and was very sorry about it, and said, "Then I will not go."

Daniello replied, "If you do not go, you will be dishonored, since you have already had the hunt announced. But if you like, I will stay behind with thirty knights to guard the palace, and if I see or hear anything that seems to dishonor you, I will act in such a way that your shame will be well vindicated." At this, the king said he was content.

Afterwards, the king rode toward the wilderness with his barons, and Lancilotto knew nothing of his other arrangements. When evening came, he went to bed with Queen Ginevara. Daniello found out about it, and in the morning attacked him with the thirty knights, shouting from the door of the room, "Come out, traitor Lancilotto, come out! Now you will be punished for your great treachery!"

Lancilotto did not hesitate one moment, but took leave of Queen Ginevara and ran out of the room with his naked blade in hand, and when he met Daniello he gave him such a blow on his helmet that he fell down dead to earth. Then he killed eight more knights, and the rest, out of fear, gave

way. Then Lancilotto went to the royal stable and, taking a strong horse, rode to his own city of Benoich.

When King Artù returned and heard the news, he was the saddest king in the world, and gave sentence that the queen should be burnt. And he gave her ten days, so that she might have time to consider her offense and repent of all her sins. Finding herself in such a situation, she was the saddest queen in the world, and sent to let Lancilotto know what had happened.

Then Lancilotto gathered all his kinsmen, saying to them, "My lords, if Queen Ginevara dies because of me, I do not want to live any longer."

Then hurriedly they mounted, eighty of them, all brothers, in-laws, and cousins, and went as secretly as they could to the deserted place called Grausin, near the royal meadow where they were going to burn the queen. It was one league outside Camellotto.

When the appointed day came, the king delivered the queen up to justice, and she went making the greatest lament in the world, surrendering herself in guilt to God her Father and Lord. The queen was accompanied by many mourners, and by a good sixty ladies who, along with her, went making great lamentations. They came to the meadow where she was to be burnt, but before any fire was brought Lancilotto and his kinsmen and brothers came out of ambush. "Onward, good people," Lancilotto cried to them, and they all shouted, "Death, death to King Artù, who has condemned the queen!"

Then on one side and the other they began to strike, and there was a cruel battle, because there were bold and worthy knights on both sides. More than twenty-six of King Artù's knights were killed, and Sir Gieus and the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat were wounded; on Lancilotto's side nine knights were killed, and Sir Astore di Mare was badly hurt. But in the end, Lancilotto managed to take his lady the queen, and ride away with his company to Gioiosa Guardia. King Artù was very sad about all this. He had all his men armed at once, and they rode after Lancilotto. Reaching Gioiosa Guardia, they closed in and began a siege, making Sir Calvano captain of the host.

From another side an army was led against Sir Lancilotto by his mortal enemy, Sir Lombardo, who brought seven hundred good knights. Lancilotto had 280 knights of high lineage, young and worthy, and had enough provisions for all their needs for one year, for that castle could not be taken in any other way than through a lack of provision, it was so strong.

When Lancilotto found himself thus besieged, he had Tristano informed of it, and sent to him asking for aid. Tristano, without delay, summoned a hundred good knights from Liones, and with these soon mounted, he needed no others. They rode in such a way as to come to Gioiosa Guardia so secretly that of the enemy troops, no one was aware of it. Then Lancilotto, seeing that this was Tristano, the flower of chivalry, had the gate opened at once. He took him by the hand, and they went to the palace; here, when

Queen Ginevara saw Tristano, whom she had wanted to see for so long, she ran to him and embraced him, and made him great honor.

When Tristano and his company had rested three days, he spoke to Lancilotto and his people, saying, "Sire, it will not do to lose time, for every day, in one way or another, our provisions are used up, and the more knights we have, the more we will lack. So, my brothers, let us go outside and try something new, for staying here doing nothing gets us nowhere."

When morning came, they saw that all of their people were armed, then they rode out of the castle. Tristano attacked Sir Lombardo's men, and Lancilotto attacked the hosts of King Artù. The battle was fierce and dangerous, and many knights were killed. Before midday, Lancilotto went back to the castle, taking with him seventy-five prisoners, and Tristano came back in the evening, bringing a hundred and seven. He left lying dead one of his own uncles, who was called Sir Landres of Liones.

When the next day came, Sir Lancilotto had many gallows built on the walls of the castle, to hang all of the prisoners they had taken. At that point, Tristano mounted and rode out in the company of two unarmed squires. They approached King Artù's army and saluted courteously, saying, "Sire, for God's sake, and for mercy, and for the honor of your crown and the liberty of all your knights whom you see so near to death, I beg you, my dear lord, that you humble your heart, and pardon Sir Lancilotto your ill-will.

"You ought to do it, for three reasons. The first is the love you bear King Bando, for you know he was your ally. The second is that so many people will not die such a vile death as you see Lancilotto wants to have them die, because all knighthood will be shamed by it; and the third is to restore peace among all the knights errant, for you see that the Tavola is in great discord. Also I pray that you will do it for my sake, for I have never asked a boon of you—this is the first, my dear lord, that your Tristano has asked of you. Give it to him freely."

And the king, understanding that this was Sir Tristano of Liones, whom he had so much wanted to see, embraced him, and kissed him more than a hundred times, saying, "Welcome is the honor of all chivalry and the flower of all knight errantry, whom I have so much wanted to see. Know, my dear Tristano, that for the offense Lancilotto has done me, I would in no way pardon him. Nevertheless, not considering any offense, for love of you I will pardon and make peace with Lancilotto. Except that the fortress and castle must always be at my disposal because I have sworn it. I must not perjure myself, nor should I."

At that point, Tristano summoned Lancilotto to the field and had the prisoners released. The king pardoned Lancilotto, and pardoned Queen Ginevara. Thus all evil will was forgotten, and Sir Lancilotto gave King Artù the keys to the fortress and the castle, and put them in his power. The king freely gave them to Sir Tristano, and Lancilotto renounced them once

and for all; then Tristano began his tenure, and left as his viceroy an uncle of Sir Lancilotto called Sir Gulistante.

When Tristano had stayed there ten days, he took leave and returned to Cornovaglia. King Artù, Queen Ginevara, Sir Lancilotto, and all the other barons went back to Camellotto, and they were all happy and joyous. Now the story stops talking about King Artù and Lancilotto, and we will tell about Sir Tristano: how he went to Petitta Brettagna, and how he took a wife.

LI.

When Sir Tristano had returned from Gioiosa Guardia, having conquered it through graciousness and love, King Marco greeted him with great affection. He was truly happy about his nephew's honor and greatness, but he was worried that Tristano might take Isotta and go to live at Gioiosa Guardia, as Lancilotto had done with Queen Ginevara. Because of his suspicions, he had Isotta locked up in a tower as he had done before. He gave her everything she asked for, and once a week went to speak with her for delight, but he spoke to her in another way every day.

Tristano could find no way to see her, and because of that he was the saddest knight in the world. The wound in his arm began to swell again, the one that Brandina had treated before. Even though it had healed on the surface, inside it was infected, and made his arm very sore. So great was the inflammation, and so great was the pain, that day or night he could find neither rest nor repose, and because of that was nearly dead.

When Tristano saw that he could get no help from Isotta, he decided to go to Petitta Brettagna, to have himself treated by the king's daughter, as Brandina had advised him to. Then with great sorrow and grave leave-taking, he and his Governale got on board a ship and set out on the high seas. The weather was good, so that in sixteen days they reached the port of Petitta Brettagna.

Then Tristano had the horses taken ashore, and all his armor, and dressed himself in fine silken robes. Disembarking, he went directly to the city of Solona, where King Gilierchino, the lord of that country, lived. As he drew near, he saw that the city was all fortified, and as he rode toward it he met the king with a large company of knights, and over their heads flew a green banner with a vermilion stripe across it.

Tristano approached the king, saluting and bowing courteously to him, saying, "Sire, I am a knight from a distant country in need of your good help. I am wounded in the arm, and I can find no treatment for it, but I have been told that in your court is a damsel who knows much about such things."

The king replied, "Knight, come to the palace, and we will see what can be done."

When they had dismounted in the main hall, the king took Tristano by the hand, then led him before his daughter, who was called Isotta of the White Hands. The king said, "Daughter, here is a knight from a foreign country who, as you see, is wounded in the arm. Thus I pray that you take him into your care and treat him."

She answered and said that she would do it gladly; then she looked at the wound and said, "Knight, this is worse now than when you were first wounded, for the one who treated you then had more will than knowledge, and wanted to make it heal too quickly." Then she took her own salves and began to treat it. Tristano, looking at the maiden, said to himself that except for Isotta the Blonde, he had never seen anyone so beautiful.

Know that King Gilierchino had one son, who was called Gheddino, and was embroiled in a great war with his nephew, who was called Sir Albroino, count of the city of Gippa. At this time the king had summoned an army behind him; he left the city with all of his people and rode to the city of Gippa. Here he encamped with engines and pavilions, and vowed never to leave until the city was in his power. After ten days, the count assembled his own troops, rode out of his city, and with all his people fiercely attacked the army of the king.

The battle was bitter and hard, and many people died on one side and the other. But in the end the king was beaten, his son wounded, and most of his people scattered. The king, with a few of his people, escaped back to Solona, and the count and his barons followed them, besieging the city. Here the count set his own standard, a yellow flag with a green stripe across it.

The beautiful Isotta, seeing her father defeated, her brother wounded, and so many people dead, made the greatest lament in the world; and the king, seeing that he was besieged and unable to defend himself, was the saddest king in the world, saying to himself, "Alas, Lord God, would that you allow some bold knight to come here, as in many places such knights have come, and through his prowess set me free from so much sorrow! By my faith, I would give him the lordship of my kingdom!"

Five days passed, then the count put all his people in order, and had his troops prepared to attack the city, knowing that the people within could not defend themselves against the great host he had with him. Then the king, Gheddino, Isotta, and all the other ladies and knights and townspeople—of whom there were just 700, able to fight or otherwise—all

together made a great lament. They were very much afraid, because they could not defend themselves against such strength.

Then Governale felt great compassion for them, and thought it was a great shame. He said to the king, Gheddino, and Isotta, "Alas, don't complain and be so sorrowful, for by good fortune this will turn out better than you could imagine or believe. You have in your court a knight errant who is the best fighter in the whole world, and if you have your daughter Isotta go and ask him, and if he is quite cured, I am sure that he will fight for you against the Count of Gippa."

At once the beautiful Isotta went to Tristano, and wisely spoke to him, saying, "Noble sir, are you well cured?"

Sir Tristano answered her, "Through God's mercy and yours, I feel very well, and I seem to be completely cured, because you have treated me so well and so diligently. I will always be at your service."

Isotta then said, "I am very glad that you are cured, for if you were not, still you could no longer be treated or healed by me; I have to leave this city and all my possessions, and the kingdom, to wander wretchedly through the world, through other lands. You see that my father is defeated, and all our people; we are all scattered or dead, and the city is as good as lost. To our misfortune, we have neither help nor counsel. Because of this, we will receive great wrong, for I do not know if my father has the power to honor this his nephew more than he has done, this nephew who now, out of great pride, rebels against him, opposing all reason and duty. I am certain that he will cause us all to die in sorrow, for he is a person who does only evil."

Tristano, seeing the maiden weeping before him, and hearing her tell what had happened, out of great tenderness and great nobility of heart began also to cry. Nonetheless, he made her no response; instead he went at once through the city where all the people were making such a great lament. After a little, Tristano climbed up on the walls, where there were some ladies and a few ancient knights set to defend the city. Then Sir Tristano looked out over the count's troops, which were well prepared and well furnished with more than 800 knights. Then Sir Tristano said to himself, "Now I am the most disgraced knight in the world, to sit within these walls. For no cause would I want the world to find out that I might defend the walls of a country; surely there never will be such a need that I find myself among women defending the walls of a city or a castle! By my faith, there was already great prowess in my killing Brunoro the Brown, and in my fighting with the high prince Galeotto. It would be no great deed to put these three troops to route—there can't be more than a thousand knights."

Then Tristano came down at once and went back to his lodgings, where he armed and prepared himself in the way a good knight does, then girded himself with Vistamara, the best and sharpest sword in the world, while Governale prepared his good horse Passabrunello in the same way. At that,

Sir Tristano mounted, for he needed no stirrup or step in order to get up on his horse, but at one stroke, in all his armor, he leaped on. Then Governale handed him his strong shield and gave him his lance.

Tristano rode out into the great piazza, where the king was with all his knights and armed people, 700 in all, and he said to the king, "Sire, and all you other knights and barons, I am sure that you recognize your situation, how you are besieged and surrounded and in danger of death. You have need of great nobility, and each one must be worth more than two, for it will be better to die with pride and courage than to live as cowards. If you help yourselves, God will help you, and if you help yourselves, you may be saved, but if you are slothful, you can expect to die.

"So now, if you will, open the gates of your city for me, because I want to go out alone at first and begin to fight. If you see that I am winning, follow me boldly and be brave and sure and give good strokes, but if you see that I am losing, close your gates, so that you will not be harmed because of me."

At those words the king was very, very happy. Then Tristano rode out of the city, and, warning the troops of the count, here began to deliver fierce blows. He lowered his good lance and rode against them, so that before it broke he had used it to send thirteen knights dead to the ground. Afterwards, he took his sharp Vistamara in hand and began to fight with great vigor. He came sending to earth knights and horses, and many barons; whoever felt one of his blows wanted no other, for they fell to the ground stunned or truly dead, so that they had no use for doctors or any other medicine.

The count, like a wise man, was terrified to see such prowess in the knight, and said, "This will be some knight errant, by whom I am defeated and shamed today. Then in great pride and anger he struck Tristano a strong blow on his helmet, wounding him slightly, but for Tristano's part, he struck the count such a great blow that he split his helmet exactly in the middle, slicing the iron cap and driving the good blade down to his teeth, so that he fell dead to earth from his horse at once, and then Tristano killed the standard-bearer too.

Now Tristano all alone had killed more than sixty knights. Then the king, seeing so much prowess in Tristano, and seeing that the count, whom he recognized, was killed and the people all dismayed, rode out of the city with his knights and began to do battle. Then the mêlée was long and serious, and many people died on both sides, but in the end the count's people were all defeated or killed, and the few who fled got back to their city as best they could.

LII.

The masters of the story tell that when Tristano saw the field emptied and most of the enemy dead, he went before the king, saying, "Sire, here you see the count dead on the plain and his people routed, so if you will take my advice you will surely have the count's city under your dominion."

Then the king got on his knees to Tristano and said, "Sir knight, you are father, lord, and governor of me, my kingdom, and all my people; therefore act, command, guide, like a captain and lord general, in any way you please."

Then Tristano commanded that they follow, and pursue the people back to the city of Gippa, thirteen leagues from Solona. Here they made such a siege that no one could go in or out of the city without being killed or taken prisoner. Thus they remained for ten days, and on the tenth day Tristano assembled his people, and formed some troops in order to attack the city. The people inside mounted the walls to defend themselves as best they could. Tristano and the king and three other old men were outside the gate, and the other barons and knights surrounded to fight as best they knew how. As they were fighting thus, out of the gates came a very old knight, called Maccabruno, who was the count's uncle. He came all unarmed, to be safer.

When he got near Tristano, he shouted, "Mercy, mercy, knight, for God and holy charity! There are not enough people in the city to do battle, for they have almost all died in the earlier defeat; but there is gold and silver enough in the country, and ladies and maidens, and all that there is, is at your service and command. We beg that you take the ladies and the knights and the citadel under your command."

Then Tristano turned to the king and asked that he pardon all those people and receive their obedience to his crown, so that they would be his servants and subjects, as they had been before. The king said to Tristano, "Sir knight, what are you saying to me? You pardon them, those who are penitent, and receive them as it seems best to you, for this is your city, and all the kingdom is yours."

At that, Tristano granted mercy to all the people, and left within a viceroy, a nephew of the king called Sir Antalino, to whom he gave a hundred knights. Afterwards, they struck camp, and all the people went back to the city of Solona. The king found his son cured, and told him how they had been delivered by the prowess of the knight; then Gheddino went to Sir Tristano, throwing himself at his feet and doing him the greatest honor in the world. Then the tables were brought out, and they went to eat. As they were eating, the king and Gheddino and Isotta prayed Tristano to tell them his name, and Tristano, seeing how gently they asked him, revealed himself honestly

and told them. When they heard that he was Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia, who was known all over the world for his goodness and courage, they were very happy and held themselves blessed if they could serve him well.

As they were living thus, one day Tristano and Gheddino went hunting near the seaside, and riding, looking, imagining, Tristano began intensely to think of and remember the beautiful Isotta the Blonde. Thinking, he recalled her beauty, and the great love she always bore him, and how she had left her father, mother, and all the world for him. And he remembered then how he had left her in prison because of her love, and he recalled the great delight they had had together; he grew so excited that his heart was broken; so ardently he desired to see her, that he fainted, and fell from his horse to the ground. He was unconscious, and a great time passed before he came to himself, so that Gheddino took him in his arms and began a lament. Then Tristano revived somewhat, and spoke, not thinking anyone could hear him. He said, "Alas, my beautiful and sweet Isotta, will I ever see you again in my life? Alas, noble, pleasing, beautiful lady, will the day come that I will hold you in my arms? Ah, most noble and precious jewel, when will I see you and hear your soft and gracious voice?"

Gheddino, hearing all this, marvelled greatly, because he heard him mention Isotta, and thought that Tristano spoke of his own sister Isotta. And he felt very sad about it, for he had rather his own sister was dead a hundred times than that Tristano should feel a single pain. As he was holding him there in his arms, Tristano returned to his senses, and then Gheddino said to him, "I marvel very much indeed that you have been in our court all this time loving my sister Isotta and have never said anything. That must be because you think I have no faith in you. Now let us go back to the palace, and I will make you her lord."

When Tristano heard these words, he began to think, saying to himself, "If I have this Isotta for my own, perhaps I will forget the beautiful Isotta." Then he spoke: "Gheddino, I don't want Isotta in any unlawful way, but if you will give her to me for a wife, I will take her."

Gheddino said, "I will give her to you in any way you want." Then they returned to the city. When they got back, Tristano went to his chamber and began to weep bitterly, saying to himself, "Alas, beautiful Isotta, if I take this Isotta as my wife, I do it to relieve you and me of so much sorrow, and to make peace between you and Marco, not because I don't love you above all other people."

Thus Tristano comforted himself, but his thoughts were vain, for he was in no way able to take joy with any other lady, that is, to have fulfillment, except with the one the love potion had put over him.

Then Gheddino told his lord the king how he had promised Isotta to Sir Tristano, because he wanted her for his wife, and the king was very happy at that news, saying, "What, Gheddino? I do not know a king in the world

who would not gladly give his daughter to Sir Tristano, for he is the most valiant knight in the world, and nobler than anyone can say. He is handsome, wise, courteous, bold, strong, and well-mannered; he has all the qualities in himself that a well-bred lord should have."

Then the king went to Tristano and said, "I give you my daughter Isotta for your wife, if it pleases you." And Tristano said that he was well pleased.

Then the king summoned all his barons to the great palace, and had Isotta come before him, accompanied by many ladies, for she had no mother. The king then said to his daughter, "If you please, I would like you to become the wife of Sir Tristano."

She replied, "Sire, if it pleases you, I will do it very gladly."

Then the king stepped forward and took her hand, putting it in the hand of Sir Tristano, then Tristano embraced her and kissed her according to the custom of the country. That evening when they had gone to bed, Tristano again embraced and kissed his lady, but still he took with her no other delight. Isotta, very happy to be in Tristano's arms, believed that by such doings ladies became pregnant: she knew no more perfect love, so great was her purity.

When the next day came, the king summoned to the great palace all the ladies of high lineage, and the barons and knights, and then he said, "Tristano, grant me a boon."

Tristano said, "Sire, ask boldly."

The king said, "Now give me your glove."

Tristano gave it to him and the king said, "I want you to take and wear the crown of this realm."

Tristano answered, "Sire, I have not taken your daughter in order to take your kingdom. I don't want to be anything but a knight, for if I were a king I would not be as free to prove myself with deeds of arms. I had rather you wear the crown all your days, then leave it to Gheddino, your son."

The king answered Tristano, "If you will not take the crown, I will never be glad or happy, and there is nothing else you can do, for you have given me your glove."

Tristano said, "I will take it, since only that will please you, but keep it in reserve for me until I ask you for it."

Then the king had written down the day and the year, saying, "I want everyone to know that from now on I wear the crown as the viceroy of King Tristano."

Now the story stops talking about King Tristano, and the viceroy holding his place and his wife Isotta, and all the matter of this country, and we will tell of King Marco of Cornovaglia, and of his wife, my lady Isotta the Blonde.

LIII.

The true story tells that when King Marco was at court, even though he had no idea where Tristano might be nor what he might be doing, he was still suspicious, and took great care to keep Isotta in prison. And she was the saddest lady in the world, for she heard no news of Tristano, and had no way to find out if he were living or dead.

While they were living like this, a knight called Sir Lambergus came one day into the hall. He approached the king, saying, "Sire, I bring you truly great and marvelous news. Know that your nephew Tristano is in Petitta Brettagna, and has set that country free. He has conquered and killed the Count of Gippa and taken his citadel, and he has married Isotta of the White Hands, the king's daughter, who is the most beautiful and gracious lady in the world. He has been made king, and has received the crown of the realm. King Gilierchino himself is completely dispossessed, having given the crown to him.

When King Marco heard this news, he was partly happy about it, and partly sad. He was pleased because Tristano had praise and honor, and because he had taken such a lovely, highborn wife that perhaps now he would no longer think of Isotta.

He said, "Lambergus, you have brought noble and wonderful news, and I am very pleased about it. But in one way it brings me sorrow: I know that Tristano will never again do his chivalrous deeds for me. I do not know of any king in the world who would not be sad to lose such a nephew."

Then because he felt secure he had Queen Isotta let out of prison, and told her all that had occured. He gave her permission to come and stay and go as she pleased, as if to say, "Tristano is so well fed now he will not care for other fodder."

When Isotta heard the cruel news, very wisely she answered the king with joy on her beautiful face, though her heart was heavy with sorrow. She said, "Sire, I am very glad of Tristano's honors, and glad to see that he has found out where his advantage lies. For he has left your court, where he always received nothing but dishonor and great shame. If God has given him any sense, he will never come back to this country."

Even though this is what the queen said, she was really the saddest lady in the world. In secret she mourned continually in great sorrow and pain, saying to herself, "Now I am surely set adrift in a lost ship, with no comfort or help, and with no pilot to guide me. Oh, woe is me, such sorrow and sadness! I am indeed the most miserable of ladies! So great is the sorrow of my heart, so much pain, my beautiful Tristano, you have brought me. Alas, woe is me, wretched woman! I little thought my hope would be taken

this way, or that I would be so abandoned. And still I cry alas! not just for my life, but because I believed you would not abandon me even in death, I believed we would die together, my beloved!'

Truly Isotta made for Tristano the greatest and bitterest lament that ever lady made for her lover. Then she summoned Brandina and said to her, "Ah, my loyal and faithful companion, my great comforter and secret counsellor, say you won't desert me now. Say you will carry a message to my Tristano, and take this letter to him where he lives now, at the king's court of Petitta Brettagna."

Brandina answered her, "My lady, I am always ready to do your will." Then with an escort of four young squires she crossed the sea to make her embassy.

Know that when Tristano accepted the lordship of Petitta Brettagna, all the people of the country were very joyful, because he maintained them in peace, justice, and great love. As he lived thus, one day he and the prince Gheddino rode out to amuse themselves beside the sea. As they looked out over the great harbor, all at once there disembarked a lady who seemed to be a noble and important messenger. Immediately upon seeing and recognizing Tristano, she lifted the beautiful veil from her face and began to call loudly, saying this: "Tristano, Tristano, never did I believe that this could ever happen, that for gold or silver or crown or kingdom you could ever abandon a love so loyal and so perfect!"

By those words and by her voice Tristano knew Brandina. He ran to her and embraced her, saying, "Oh, how welcome you are! What news do you bring of my lady Isotta? How is my sweet hope now?"

Then Brandina began the greatest lament in the world, and afterwards she said, "May God quell and scatter all disloyal knights who are false to loyal loves! Alas, Tristano, you traitor, how could you commit so great a sin? How have you left your sweet Isotta, the one you have known since you were both so young? Alas, wicked Tristano, I never believed that you would be false to the love of so noble a lady as Isotta the Blonde! Surely she loves you more than anyone else in the world, and surely she is more beautiful than any other lady, as beautiful as anyone could ever desire. How could you betray her and abandon her this way? She is near death because of what you have done; even so, she is your loving, humble subject. By me she sends you a thousand kisses, and this letter, and beseeches that you come back to her without delay."

Then with many tears and great sighs, Tristano reached out his hand for the letter, took it and opened it. This is what it said:

LIV.

Beloved, beloved Tristano, loved by my heart and my loyal love over all others loved by anyone, your sorrowing Isotta sends you her greetings. I am Isotta, she who, because of you, abandoned father, mother, husband, and all other people, and who now lives only in hope of you, who have failed me. I am struck with wonder, for I did not think that anything could come between us. If Merlino the Prophet had said it was so, I would not have believed it. I would not have believed that you could so abandon your Isotta, who for your sake abandoned all others.

"If you have had no wife, I also have no husband, for by my own will I have truly known no other man. Since I live only in hope of your comfort, now that you have deceived me, I will die. I swear that since the cruel day I heard the doleful, deathbringing news there has been no comfort left for me except to bewail my pain and my great sorrow, which I will do continually while I believe you love another more than you love me.

"My fate will be decided at the moment I see Brandina again, for if you are with her my life will be glad once more. But if you have truly deceived me, this deception will bring me a cruel death; on the very moment of the day Brandina returns alone, my soul will leave my sorrowing body.

"It is nothing to marvel at, even if you have abandoned Isotta for Isotta, if I still love you much more than I love myself. Always and always your Isotta has made this prayer: 'Lord God, merciful and kind, you created me as it pleased you to and gave me rank and beauty. I have granted myself to one knight only, and never will I have delight or knowledge of any other.' Now I have lost him, and I am so unfortunate and sad that never again will I be happy. And it was not my fault, but the fault of evil fortune.

"Thus I pray to you, my dear delight, that you send me comfort in my pain, for the tongue cannot tell nor the heart contain the seventh part of all my sorrow. It has so affected me that I have lost the power and memory and strength to write it. But you, for you are wise, must imagine and know how much pain and sorrow I bear for you, my dear delight, my gentle hope, solace and harbor of all my thoughts. Remember me now my love, gentle Tristano. Alas, remember your Isotta, who lives and dies in hope of you. Alas, Tristano, noble knight, how sad my heart is without you! How news of you would comfort the one who has been imprisoned so long for love for you! And so I beg that you provide me, your miserable lady, with some measure of your comfort, and do it soon, before it is too late."

Be sure that as Tristano read this letter, he stopped after every line to weep and sigh. His heart grew weak, his hand trembled, and he could no longer read. When he got to the part that said, "Remember me now my

love, gentle Tristano," he let himself fall from his horse, lying for a long time unconscious on the ground, so that he felt nothing. Brandina, Gheddino and the others were afraid he might truly have died, but after a while he came to himself and began the greatest lament in the world.

"Oh, alas, I am miserable! Does my lady bear so much pain and misery on my account? Alas, my beautiful, sweet Isotta, who for my sake never shrank from fear or shame! I have forgotten myself in this foolish act, but even so, our loyal love has not been betrayed!"

Tristano was making so great a moan that Gheddino questioned him, saying, "Where has all this new sadness come from?"

Tristano answered him, "Gheddino, I love and am loved by a lady who is queen of Cornovaglia. Her name is Isotta the Blonde, and she is the most beautiful lady nature ever made. And so I now return your sister to you as pure as when you gave her to me, for I must go back to see my gentle lady, who is so beautiful that she makes all others disappear, and no other lady, no matter how noble or chaste or lovely she may be, can come close to equalling her."

When Gheddino heard how Tristano loved Isotta the Blonde, he fell in love with her himself, for he had heard many times the things that Tristano had been saying about her, and how she surpassed all others in beauty. He begged Tristano to take him along to Cornovaglia.

Tristano agreed, and told him some things about that country. Then he said that if anyone asked who Brandina was, Gheddino should say she was a messenger sent to bring him back to his own country because his barons were in great discord.

Then the three of them returned to the city, and as soon as they reached the palace the king and Isotta wanted to know who the lady might be. Just as he had planned, Tristano said that she had come for him from his own country of Liones, because his barons were fighting among themselves. Then Isotta and her father were both very sad that Tristano had to go away, but the reason for it consoled them a little.

The king begged Tristano to return very soon, and to go well attended, but Tristano told him, "I want no other companion except Gheddino, your son."

When she met Brandina, Isotta received her with much honor; still, the young princess was greatly tormented by Tristano's going away.

And know that before Tristano left he had a statue made of Isotta the Blonde, because he so much wanted to look at her. A master from the city of Gippa sculpted it, just like the one he earlier had made for Queen Lotta in the city of Londres in Irlanda. He made her image so true to life and so beautiful that truly it seemed to be she, and Tristano kept it concealed in his room.

One day when Gheddino came into the room, for a joke Tristano said,

"The beautiful Isotta has come to visit me!"

And Gheddino, seeing the statue from across the room, thought it was truly she. Bowing low, he greeted her, "My lady, you are welcome, a thousand times welcome! It is such a great honor that you have journeyed to see your Tristano, who has been so longing to see you."

Then Tristano and Governale began to laugh with the greatest mirth in the world, and Gheddino, who saw his mistake, soon joined in. Still, he earnestly persuaded Tristano to begin their journey soon, because of his desire to see Isotta and find out if she was as beautiful in life as she was in art.

And know that the master sculptor who shaped that image was knighted by Sir Tristano. He was dubbed for his art, Sir Statuano, and given the lordship of the city of Gippa for ten years.

As the time approached for Tristano to leave, he said farewell to the king, to Isotta, and to all his subjects. Then he and Gheddino, Governale and Brandina boarded a well-provisioned ship and caught the wind in their sails. The weather was right so that in a short time they were on the high seas.

Then Isotta climbed the tallest tower in the city and stayed there to watch Tristano's ship as long as she could see it. She prayed fervently to God to watch over him, then with many tears she came down again to the ground.

IV.

Now in this part the story tells how Tristano fared on the high seas. The good weather lasted until they were three days out from Petitta Brettagna, but on the fourth day two winds arose which blew contrary to each other, tossing and turning the helpless ship. For five days they were in great torment, until finally they found themselves on dry land in a savage and deserted country in some part of Longres.

Tristano asked the captain of the ship what country they had reached, and the old sailor told him that fortune had brought them to the country of King Artù. "And this wilderness you see before you, so vast and terrible, is the proving ground for the Tavola Ritonda. It is called the Wilderness of Andernantes, and it is where many, many have been led on to new and high adventures."

When Tristano heard that this was the Wilderness of Andernantes he was very glad, for he had heard of it, and knew that it was the testing place where all the knights errant competed with each other. He said, "By my

faith, I will go and test myself in this wilderness against the brave knights errant."

Then he said to Brandina and Governale, "It would please me if you would sail on to Cornovaglia. When you come to the castle at Cornasin, you, Brandina, go to Queen Isotta and tell her how I have left Petitta Brettagna and that I will be with her soon. And tell her the truth about what you know: that I have never been unfaithful to her.

"Then you, Governale, go to King Marco and tell him that I am in Petitta Brettagna with my wife Isotta, and give him this letter. After you have received his reply, go back to Dinasso's castle and wait there in secret for my return.

"And if the reply he makes to me is favorable, I will be very glad, but if it is not the one I want, I will discover another way to speak with Isotta."

LVI.

Now the story tells that Tristano and Gheddino, with two squires to carry their shields, disembarked and went on horseback through the great wilderness of Andernantes. Governale and Brandina went on over the high seas, and within ten days reached the land of Cornovaglia and Cornasin Castle.

Brandina went secretly to the queen and told her everything that had happened, and told her that Tristano had not been false to her in any way.

On the next day, Governale went before King Marco, bowing low and greeting him very courteously on Tristano's behalf, and presented him the letter. The king opened it and read it, to find out what it contained. The letter said this: "To the just and powerful lord, the magnificent and merciful King Marco, Tristano your nephew and servant, with good will and particular obedience, commends himself to you. In happiness and prosperity one remembers one's elders and relatives; now that I am myself again I remember you, my nearest kinsman. Gladly would I come to visit you again in your court, and bring with me my brother-in-law to make a month's celebration."

After he had read the letter, the king said to Governale, "I won't write back, because you are a confidential messenger. But go back now to Petitta Brettagna, and greet King Gilierchino and his daughter Isotta on my behalf. Then say this to my nephew Tristano: 'Into the kingdom you have conquered sword in hand, you may come and go, inviting anyone you desire to be here and stay here.' And keep well in mind to greet Isotta for me, Isotta whom I hold as my own daughter."

Then Governale took leave of King Marco and went back to the castle of Dinasso. There he stayed in secret awaiting Tristano's return, which was delayed forty-two days.

LVII.

Now the story tells that as Tristano and his brother-in-law Gheddino were riding through the great desert of Andernantes, all that day they saw neither house nor habitation. Finally they rode to the top of a hill at sunset, then on their left they caught sight of a hermitage. They rode on that way, and when they reached the door they called out the name "Grisostimo," because they had been told before that in this part of the wilderness lived a holy hermit so named.

In a minute the hermit appeared, and his hair was pale white: it was this same Grisostimo. He asked them what they wanted, and Tristano replied: "Fortune has brought us here. We are knights from a foreign country in need of hospitality, for we have had nothing to eat all day."

The hermit said, "I came into this cell eighty-six years ago, and since then I have eaten nothing but herbs and wild fruit, and drunk nothing but water."

Then the knights unbridled their horses and turned them out to graze, and went inside and rested. Sir Tristano asked the hermit, "Servant of God, where in this wilderness may we find the most chivalrous adventures, and where do they practice the customs of chivalry? We come from a distant land and have never been in this country before."

The hermit replied, "Sir knight, truly it was but twelve days ago that two knights errant rode by. They told me that King Artù himself was lost in this forest and could nowhere be found, not alive nor dead. All the knights errant have answered the call to search for him, so if that is what you are looking for, you will find adventure enough on every side.

"But this desert belongs to knights errant, and no one may be called a

knight errant who has not first proved himself. It was in this very place that the Tavola Ritonda was discovered and dedicated. This is a very strange country, a place where ladies and maidens and other people without power were terrorized. It is known as a place outside of reason, a place where people rob and steal. At first it was called Merlino's Wilderness, because Merlino the Prophet built it, and set it here by magic, but now it is known as the Wilderness of Andernantes because the knights of Irlanda first took it under their protection.

"The garden of the Tavola Ritonda is here, a place very dear to King Artù and the knights of the Tavola. And three kinds of people are found here: ladies and maidens, knights errant, and foreign knights who refuse neither swordplay nor joust; for in this forest, people practice the uses of arms to serve God and do penance for their sins.

"And so I advise you, if you are not a knight of great name and mighty deeds, you should not presume to go armed. If you do, you will have to fight with whomever challenges you, but if you go unarmed you can pass safely through the whole wilderness, 300 leagues across."

Hearing these words made Tristano very happy. He said to Gheddino, "Now we are very fortunate knights, for we find ourselves here among the greatest adventures in the world!" Then he asked the hermit, "Servant of God, in what part of the forest will we find chivalrous adventures most quickly?"

The holy hermit answered him, "Keep to your left as you ride through the forest, and you will come to the Fontana Avventurosa, where more chivalry is practiced than anywhere else in the world."

The knights passed that night as best they could, eating fruit and wild greens, badly seasoned. When morning came, they armed themselves, mounted, took leave and rode on their way. They rode all day without sight of house or dwelling, and had nothing to eat but wild fruit. That night they took refuge on the crest of a high hill.

Gheddino said to Tristano, "You told me that we would find more adventures in this wilderness than in any other place, but by my faith I believe it is full of great misadventures, for we have ridden for two days and found nothing to eat."

Tristano answered, "These are the adventures of knights errant, to go through strange provinces and unfamiliar countries. The wilder a country is, the more likely are we to find chivalrous adventures there. On the day that a young man takes on the responsibilities of chivalry and knight errantry, he vows to ride through strange lands and wild forests, to protect others against harm. The wilder a country is, the more likely it is to be lawless: when a knight errant knows this, the more he should try to make it secure and familiar."

Then Gheddino was quiet, but he was not sure he agreed with Tristano,

because he was very hungry and could find nothing to eat. They passed the night restlessly, and in the morning rode on through the great forest, so that at the hour of tierce they came to the Fontana Avventurosa. Tristano, who was keeping careful watch, soon saw a knight all armed.

When this knight saw the two friends, he approached at once and demanded an encounter. Then Gheddino pressed Tristano to let him ride first against the knight errant, to find out if he could in any way compete. When Tristano agreed, Gheddino and the knight rode against each other, but Gheddino had so little strength that the stranger unhorsed him, and he lay on the ground badly wounded.

Then Tristano rode to the joust, and the two knights struck each other with their lances in such a way that the weapons were shattered in many pieces. They drew their swords and began a terrible battle, each one striking the other with all his strength. But bold Sir Tristano struck his opponent on the helmet with such force that he knocked him to the earth. With that, he saw how bruised and wounded Gheddino was, and he was very angry.

He asked the stranger knight for his name, and the man answered, "I am called Amorotto of Gaules."

When Tristano found out that this was Amorotto, whom he hated so much, the very knight who had so misused and dishonored him, he got off his horse at once, saying, "Amorotto, Amorotto, I promise you will have need of all your prowess now, for here in front of you is Tristano of Cornovaglia in whose despite you sent the enchanted horn to King Marco, the horn by which Queen Isotta was almost killed. Defend yourself now, for I challenge you to the death!"

Amorotto, hearing that this was indeed Tristano, was very afraid. He said, "Tristano, I swear to you that I did not send the horn in your despite, but only to insult the Cornish nation."

But Tristano said, "Amorotto, Amorotto, your excuse is worth nothing." Then he struck such a blow on his helmet that blood spurted from his nose and his mouth, and he fell heavily to the ground. Tristan was going to kill him then, until Amorotto cried for mercy for Lancilotto's sake. When he did that, Tristano pardoned him, and they made peace.

Then Amorotto, who knew the customs and the pathways of the great wilderness, led Tristano and Gheddino to a foreigner's dwelling. Here they were received with great honor, and rested while Gheddino was treated for his wounds.

Know that in those days there were three ways for a knight errant to find shelter, both they and the foreign knights who rode then through the world, proving themselves and seeking their fortune with deeds of arms. If they were going through a civilized country where there were cities and towns and castles they could, if they wanted, go to the palace of that country's

ruler. If they did not want to do that, they could go to the hostels maintained by the lords of the province, and here they would be well received. If they were in an uncivilized country, where there was neither town nor dwelling place, the lords who owned that section maintained dwellings there, and certain outposts where they had foreigners live. These foreigners then sheltered the traveling knights who came by. Finally, if the knights were riding through deserted and savage country, where for fear of wicked wild beasts no one wanted to spend the night, they would find that the lords of those lands had built at certain outposts fine, large shelters furnished with oats and hay, biscuits, wines and meat. These would be locked with keys, and the keys would be fastened to rings outside the door so that all who came by could take what they needed.

Thus the knights of that time trusted themselves to fortune, and went about freeing the world. They were of great use, and because of them all the countries around were secure and at peace.

Now when Sir Tristano and Amorotto had rested a while in the foreigner's house, they took their leave. Gheddino, because of his wound, could not ride, and Tristano left him in the care of their host to have his hurts attended, because they thought they would soon come back.

And so Tristano and Amorotto rode on through the great wilderness. At the hour of nones they came to the Fountain of Bacino, where they let their horses drink. They had been there just a little while when they heard a great noise, and Amorotto said, "Tristano, have you ever seen the Beast Gratisanti?"

When Tristano said no, Amorotto said, "Move away from here if you want to see her."

Just a little way from them the beast came to drink, and when she had drunk she continued on through the forest. Immediately there followed a knight in pursuit of her, one who was called Prezzivale lo Galese. When he came near, Amorotto, who was his brother, rode toward him and called him to joust. They rode against each other and struck blows of great strength, but it was Prezzivale who sent Amorotto sprawling to the ground. At that Tristano rode to the joust. They lunged at each other and exchanged strong blows, until their lances were shattered and both of them were unhorsed.

Then Prezzivale did not dare stay any longer, but rode away through the forest in pursuit of the Beast Gratisanti. Tristano took leave of Amorotto and set out after Prezzivale; he wanted to make the acquaintance of one who could deal such great blows. Amorotto also rode on that same day, in the company of Sir Meliagans, son of King Bando of Magus, but a quarrel arose between them because Amorotto claimed that the Queen of Organia was more beautiful than Queen Ginevara.

LVIII.

In this part the story tells where Tristano went after he left Amorotto. First he went in search of the knight who pursued the Beast Gratisanti, but he could not find him anywhere. Then as he was riding thus across a hillside in the wilderness he met an armed knight, and each of them greeted the other one courteously. This knight, noticing that Tristano was bearing insignia that he had never seen before, wondered greatly about him and asked him who he might be. Tristano replied that he was a knight from the kingdom of Cornovaglia.

Then the knight, who was a man of many words and something of a bully, said to Tristano, "Alas, what evil fortune! How can it be that a Cornish knight rides through this wilderness? Now I say that this country is badly dishonored to the disgrace of all knights errant, for by my faith among a hundred of you Cornishmen I don't value one in deeds of arms!"

Tristano, when he saw that this knight held him in contempt and was so insulting in his speech, answered him to the contrary, saying that he had come into the wilderness to prove himself in just such deeds of arms, and to find out whether the knights in this part of the world were as noble, courteous, and brave as those in Cornovaglia.

The knight responded, "In this country you will never find one thing called a knight to compare to those of King Marco of Cornovaglia, because the most despised and cowardly villain who ever lived in Longres could demolish King Marco and the ten best knights in his land."

At those words Tristano laughed out loud, and asked the knight his name. He said that he was called Chieso the Seneschal—"but since the hour that King Artù was lost in this forest I am called the king-seneschal, for I rule in Artù's place. But now I want you to profit by my wisdom, because you are not a man who should joust, nor are you accustomed to a country where jousts worth anything are held. I advise you, therefore, to ride unarmed so you can pass safely through the whole wilderness, since wherever you come from if you ride around armed like this you will be forced into encounters. If you joust, you will probably be killed, because right now all of the knights of the Tavola are in these woods; they have all come in search of King Artù, who is lost somewhere in the wilderness. Now I will lead you to a foreigner's house where you may eat and drink, then you should get out of here at once, and think about busying yourself with something besides deeds of arms."

Tristano answered him, "Sir, I have made up my mind that before I leave this country I will have proved myself through feats of arms. I came here for no other reason but to find out if King Artù's knights are as worthy as those of King Marco of Cornovaglia."

At that, Sir Chieso laughed the biggest laugh in the world, saying to Tristano, "You won't be able to find anyone to fight with you if you ride all alone, for Cornish knights are held at ten to one—ten are not worth one from this country."

So Sir Tristano and Sir Chieso rode on together, and Tristano, who saw very well that the knight held him in disdain, secretly delighted in it, and spoke in such a way that he would be disdained even more. As they were riding thus, they came to a great river, and Sir Chieso said to Tristano, "We need to get across this water if we expect to find shelter, so you go on in front."

"You go," said Tristano, "since you're familiar with the area. I'll follow behind you."

Then Chieso said to Tristano, "Which would you rather do, go first here or ride on to a bridge and fight with the knight who guards it?"

Tristano said he would rather challenge the knight, so the two of them rode on in that direction. They found the knight at the bridge who was indeed ready to joust, and Chieso said to Tristano, "Knight, there you see the guardian of the bridge. Go and joust with him."

Then Tristano, to have more fun with this man who held him in such disdain, said, "Noble sir, you go and fight with him. If you are victorious, we can then pass by well and lightly, and if you lose there are other roads here to take."

Then Sir Chieso summoned his squire and took his lance and his shield, saying, "I wish King Marco were dead and never a knight had been born in his country! The men are all cowardly, greedy, and proud, and the women are liars, drunks, and whores."

At once he rode out against the knight of the bridge, who was called Euputtalegge, and that knight rode to encounter him. Each struck the other one great blow, and Chieso sent his opponent to the ground, badly wounded.

Then he said to Tristano, "Now, cross. And soon the Irish will cross into Cornovaglia, where they will leave neither villa nor castle nor house, but will put everything to fire and flame! For by my good faith I think rather well of myself that I don't take that horse there away from you—he seems good and strong—and make you go on foot."

Tristano answered, "Surely, sire, I will gladly cross, since God has sent us such good fortune and delivered us from that knight. I must say, I think you must be the best fighter in the world, because you overcame that knight so easily in the first encounter."

At those words, Chieso laughed loudly. Then they rode on until they came to a foreigner's house, where they rested from traveling. Inside the hall they found two knights errant. One was Sir Gariette and the other was Sir Agravano, who greeted Sir Chieso with much honor, and asked him if he were alone.

To this Chieso said, "I am not alone, but I am poorly attended. At the

edge of this wilderness I met a Cornish knight—there you see him, right out there. He is big and strong and handsome, well armed and well mounted, but he is surely the least worthy, most cowardly knight that I have ever run across." And then he told them all the things that Tristano had said and done along the way. "But I want us to leave him here in the morning, so that we can give him what he has coming. We can go a little ahead, then turn and meet him again and challenge him to joust. I have given him fair warning about the way things are done here, yet he insists he will still ride armed: in spite of what I have told him he will not leave off. I am sure, when we challenge him, he will run off at top speed."

The plan pleased and delighted the other knights, and they agreed to it. Gariette said, "By my faith, I am rather surprised at this, for I see that he is well made, so strong in body that rarely have I seen his equal, nor one who sat a horse so well. And I tell you, I think I have seen him somewhere before, but I can't remember where."

Tristano, who was lying down on the other side of the hall, heard all that they said, and made other plans for himself than the ones they were making. Then the tables were set out and they all took their places. The host, seeing that Tristano was scorned and held in disdain, made him sit at the foot of the table and to torment him said, "Now, eat, knight, so that you will grow strong, for tomorrow you must fight with a proud and valiant soldier." Tristano made no answer to that, but he ate valiantly indeed.

When morning came the four knights armed themselves, mounted, and rode on their way through the great wilderness. They came to a place where the road divided and continued on in two directions.

Chieso then said to Sir Tristano, "Knight, you choose one of these two roads, and the rest of us will follow the other. Take whichever one you like; it is just that we have to ride on more quickly."

Tristano replied, "Then you choose the one that pleases you. I will go more slowly on the other, so as not to tire my horse too much."

Then the three knights quickly chose one of the ways and rode on. A little way down they reached a place where the two roads joined again, and there they waited a moment until Tristano came along. Sir Chieso challenged him to joust, saying to his companions, "Now watch him run away!" as he rode against him. But Sir Tristano did not refuse the joust at all. Instead he accepted the challenge, and each of them struck the other a great blow on his shield. Tristano seemed not even to feel Sir Chieso's blow: he did not even bend over the saddlebow. Rather he hit Chieso such a blow that he fell heavily to earth, wounded. Then he overcame both Gariette and Agravano without even breaking his lance, and without another word rode off on his way.

Then the two younger knights got to their feet and helped Sir Chieso up, because he could not stand by himself. They put him on his horse and told

him to wait there, while they rode after Tristano. When they caught up, they said to him, "Knight, for courtesy's sake and the love of whatever you love most, and for the honor of chivalry, and by whatever vows you took on the day your sword was belted on you, we pray that you reveal your name."

Tristano, when he heard how courteously they implored him, told them his name. Immediately they rode back to Sir Chieso and told him that the knight who had beaten them was called Tristano of Cornovaglia. Chieso was much comforted by that, saying, "My wound is already better, for it is in no way shameful to be beaten by the best knight in the world."

After that, they returned to the foreigner's house, and when the host saw them he asked what had happened with the Cornish knight who was so cowardly, saying, "Did you drown him in water?"

Gariette replied, "Alas, good host, if we insulted the knight from Cornovaglia, we cannot be held guilty of any villainy or crime, because he has shriven us well and nobly, and assigned us the penance we deserve. I assure you, my friend, we were all three beaten with one lance. If you don't believe me, look here at your king-seneschal wounded: two of his ribs are broken."

Then Sir Chieso said, "Noble host, by my faith, this wound troubles me a great deal, but when we think that we were beaten by the best knight in the world, we are not too much ashamed. That man was the worthy Sir Tristano of Liones, the most courteous, bravest, noblest knight in the world."

Then Sir Agravano attended Sir Chieso, for all the knights errant knew how to treat wounds and take care of other needs of that sort.

LIX.

The storytellers say that when Tristano parted from the three knights he had beaten, he rode through a deep valley, very dark and full of shadows, a place no one ever went because it was so dark and full of thorns. The air was so close and so dense down there that he could hardly see anything, and there were dangerous beasts. Soon he came to a place where he could not find out how to go any farther, and began to believe he would have to turn back.

At that moment, a maiden on horseback suddenly appeared on a narrow path in front of him. She was all disheveled and rode crying, making the greatest lament in the world. Tristano was astonished by this sight, and asked the maiden to tell him, for courtesy's sake, why she was so very sorrowful.

He promised to do any feat of arms that lay within his power if he could be of use to her in any way.

The maiden answered him, "Knight, if I cry and make lament, so ought all kings and barons and knights weep and worry, for today will occur the most horrible thing ever to happen since the Tavola Ritonda was formed. Know, then, that I ride in search of Sir Lancilotto, or Palamidesso, or Prezzivale, for this adventure requires a proven knight—he will need great prowess. Now I give you good day; I must not linger."

Then Tristano was very reluctant for the maiden to ride away, so he said to her, "Lady, I want you to know that all knights can't be Lancilotto or Palamidesso, but I will tell you this much. I am one who, if you will allow it, would go with you and do for you all that is in the power of my arms. And I promise you I know of no knight or baron for fear of whom I would ever turn my shield."

In truth, Tristano made many great boasts to the maiden, and spoke very highly of himself. He did it so that she would believe in him and would take him on this adventure; he did not do it for any wrong reason. But indeed the story says that Tristano made great boasts.

The maiden, upon hearing such high, proud words, considered them, and decided that they were well spoken. She saw how well made his body was, and how noble, and how well his armor fit, and said to herself, "This man cannot be other than a knight of great prowess and skill."

She asked him his name, and Tristano told her frankly. When she heard that this was Tristano, about whose prowess and nobility she had heard so much, she took him along with her. And if anyone asks me why the maiden was weeping, I will say it was for King Artù, who was in danger of death if some proud knight would not come to his aid.

Riding together along the narrow path in the forest, Tristano and the maiden came to a rich palace, beautiful, strong, and delightful. It was in a great valley of the wilderness, encircled by four of the highest mountains, and full of fine gardens and the tallest of trees, the least of which was more than one hundred and sixty feet high. No one ever came to this place, so thick and dense was the forest around it, so dark and dangerous the valley, circled around by a very great river.

The palace in the middle of the great valley was the biggest and best guarded, circled around by walls of whitest marble. The palace was square, 666 feet on a side; it was a thousand feet high and had more than 150 rooms inside. At each corner there was a tower strongly made of diamond, and in the center a tower all of metal. This one had on every side ten windows of fine coral, and on top of each of its corners there was a carbuncle which sent as much splendor over the countryside as if 400 lights were continuously burning. At the entrance to the tower was a door made of jasper, so fashioned that anyone who went inside and closed it could see clearly if someone was

approaching, but those on the outside could see nothing within.

In the very middle of the palace was the most elegant room: all the doors were made of striped ebony and adamant, so that fire could never burn them, and the floor was all of garnet, arnicolo, and topaz,[20] and shone brilliantly. No one who entered there could ever feel any pain in his body, and everything looked the same before as behind him. And there was a bed well furnished in every imaginable way, for the featherbed, sheets, and covers were perfectly clean, with many lovely things embroidered all over them. The bed was hung round with a curtain worked with images of ladies and maidens, knights and young men, all nude, who seemed truly to be alive and made of human flesh. Some of them were embracing, and some kissing, some sat and some were standing; thus they lay, taking pleasure and delight, enjoying each other in all of the ways love commanded.

When he looked at those images, no man could be so chaste that he would have the power to refrain. And sewn in the curtain were more than 400 golden bells, so that by pulling a silver rope they could be made to resound throughout the valley. And in the hall of that tower there was a little dog who, with the sound of her bark, could summon all the beasts of the valley. At the head of the hall were chained two lions, and next to them two dragons. There was a metal parapet all around the palace, and the tower stood one hundred feet above the high walls.

In this valley there was also a fishpond which had in it every kind of fish anyone could possibly name. This place was the most delightful in the world, outside of paradise, and it was called the marvellous Palace of Grande Disio. Its lady was the maiden Elergia, daughter of the lady of the Island of Vallone.

This lady of Vallone had created the palace by her magic arts, intending to live in it with the prophet Merlino and take delight with him; but Merlino, who knew more about magic than she did, tricked her and sent her to live on the Island of Vallone which is in the Soriano Sea. Her daughter Elergia now lived in the palace, a maiden who well knew the seven arts of necromancy as well as the workings of enchantment.

lx.

In this part the story says that as Tristano and the maiden approached the palace, they saw a knight lying on the ground, with three knights on foot and one on horseback standing over him. A lady stood beside them, commanding them thus: "Kill him! Kill this traitor who would leave here against my will!"

Then the maiden said to Tristano, "Knight, now you will have to display the greatest prowess you can summon. If you do, you will be the happiest knight in the world, knowing you have accomplished the greatest feat, the one that all knights errant have sought for a long time. For I assure you the knight on the ground is King Artù, and now it is up to you to save him."

When he heard this, Tristano was indeed the happiest knight in the world. With a bold and joyful heart he lifted his shield and grasped his lance, then rode to attack the mounted knight. The knight met his attack with great strength, but Tristano had so strong a desire to achieve the adventure that his great blow sent the stranger dead to the ground.

After that he dismounted, took his sword in his hand, and attacked the other three knights. He delivered such great blows that in a short time he had killed them all. The lady Elergia, when she saw that all four of her brothers were dead, began to flee toward the palace tower, but the maiden who had guided Tristano shouted to him, "Knight, knight! Capture that lady or else you will have accomplished nothing."

Tristano then leaped in front of the door and held the lady by her very blonde hair, giving her to the maiden to guard. The maiden brought her before King Artù who at once took his sword in hand and cut off her head. Tristano was very surprised by this; still, he said nothing just then. Instead he presented himself before the maiden, saying, "Lady, do you have more need of my services?"

The maiden replied, "You have already done so much that it will be remembered as long as the world lasts: you have accomplished the greatest adventure in Grande Brettagna. But now it would be courteous of you to accompany the king until you meet some knights of his court."

Having said this, the maiden picked up the lady's head and rode toward Camellotto, to tell how King Artù had been set free. Tristano brought a horse for the king and helped him to mount, then they set out to ride through the great wilderness. The king thought that this might be one of the brave knights of his own court, and said to him, "Noble sir, tell me your name, for you have surely saved me from death."

Tristano answered him, "Sire, for courtesy's sake, I hope you will pardon me if I don't tell you my name just now." At that, the king was silent.

As they rode on, Tristano said to the king, "Sire, I marvel greatly that you cut off the lady's head. It doesn't seem fitting for a king to be involved in such a business."

Then the king said, "Knight, know that I left Camellotto more than three months ago and set out to look for adventure in this wilderness. I had come to the Fontana Avventurosa and was resting there when that woman, the one I just killed, arrived and asked that I come a little way with her, to defend her from a great wrong which was done to her. I, as we are all bound to do, went with her, and she led me to that palace which you saw.

"When we dismounted she took me by the hand and led me to a chamber so beautiful and so noble that I could not restrain my desire. I asked her for her love, and she gave me a ring. As long as I wore it on my finger, I was so bound by love of her that I did not remember Queen Ginevara or any of my knights, and I took of that damsel all my delight.

"As we were living like that, the Dama del Lago sent to me the maiden you saw, the one who brought you here. When she met me at the door of the palace she greeted me, then came up to me and pulled the ring off my finger, then afterwards went away. At that point, I was free of the enchantment. I came to myself and knew my condition, then I tried to get away. The sorceress, seeing that, was very upset, and commanded her four brothers to prevent me. They took me and were going to kill me, but at that very moment the maiden who freed me from the ring brought you, and you readily came and delivered me from death. Then when I thought of the evil that woman had done, and how she would do it another time to someone else, I cut off her head."

Then Tristano saw that the king had done the right thing, that he had suffered enough to make the deed necessary.

LXI.

The true story tells that as King Artù and Sir Tristano were riding through that wild forest they encountered a fully armed knight, Sir Astore di Mare. As he drew near, this knight called upon Tristano to joust with him. They rode against each other at once and exchanged two great blows, but it was Tristano, the stronger, who sent the other quickly to earth. Then he approached the king and said, "Sire, I will bid you farewell and go now, since this knight can accompany you home."

The king pressed him warmly to come to Camellotto, but Tristano did not want to do anything until he had returned to the place where he had left his wounded brother-in-law, Gheddino.

When the defeated knight, Sir Astore, recognized the king, he ran to him, embraced him, and asked how he had been set free; then the king told him all that had happened. They rode until they reached the foreigner's house, where they found the king-seneschal, Gariette, and Agravano, who greeted the king with greatest honor and wanted to know the way he had been freed. The king told them his story, and said he was the saddest man in the world because he had not been able to find out the name of the knight who had saved him from death.

Gariette said, "Tell me what insignia he carried." And the king at once told him it was a golden lion on a blue field.

The three knights then told the king, "Truly, sire, you were delivered through the prowess of the noblest, bravest knight in the whole world (this is certain), who yesterday beat all three of us with one lance. He is dear to Sir Chieso, who held him in disdain to his own undoing, for as you can see he gave our seneschal such a wound that because of Tristano's valor Chieso will not be able to bear arms again for a month. And I tell you he has well deserved any service you can render him, because it was for his sake you pardoned Lancilotto and lifted the siege on Gioiosa Guardia. It was Sir Tristano, noble sire, the one you love so much."

The king was very happy at these words, and held himself greatly honored. As they were resting thus, in the evening Sir Lancilotto and Sir Ivano arrived. When they saw the king and heard how he had been set free, they made the greatest celebration in the world, and passed that night in great contentment. Much they talked of how it had been between Sir Tristano and Sir Chieso, and took great delight in the way the seneschal had held Tristano in such disdain.

Lancilotto said to Chieso, "You, by my faith, were wise indeed when you thought Sir Tristano would run away from a few words! But as I hear it, you would not believe this until you'd proven it by deeds!"

Chieso replied, "If I was slow to believe, he has paid me well, for I am now certain. Might you be sure of another such blow! But still I wouldn't blame you if you avoid an encounter, for I am sure he would give you trouble and hard work." And with this sort of teasing and joking, the knights entertained themselves with the best solace in the world.

LXII.

The story now tells that when morning came the knights left and rode on their way toward the city of Camellotto, and Lancilotto rode ahead to tell how Tristano had saved the king from death. After they reached the palace and rested a little, the king sent for nearly 300 workmen, commanding them to go to the Palace of Grande Disio and pull down the palace and the tower at once, to destroy it all, and scatter it on the ground. But know that the king was to be disappointed, because not for all the workmen he sent or ever will send would that tower be lessened a denier's worth, but would stand as long as the world shall last, according to the prophecy Merlino made when he set the great wilderness of Andernantes around it.

He prophesied that the tower would fall in the first thunder which signalled the end of the world, and would fall first before any other structure, to show that things made by art and worldly knowledge are sooner corrupted and made worthless than things made by faith. And the powerful lords who do not use their wisdom and power for justice will go sooner to the depths than things made by simplicity.

And so King Artù remained at court, full of joy to be home again. The tables were set, and water was brought for the washing of hands, then everyone sat down to eat, each one in his accustomed place.

You should know that in King Artù's court there were principally four kinds of seats. The first was a single one, the Seggio Periglioso: no one sat in it, because Merlino had prophesied that whoever sat there would dissolve and be corrupted in every limb unless he were the virgin knight who by the power of his virginity would achieve the adventure of the Sangradale. (This was going to be Sir Galasso, the son of Sir Lancilotto, who was born and brought up in a great convent of women.)

The second kind of seat was the Seggio Reale, where King Artù sat. The third was the Seggio Avventuroso, and in these sat the knights of adventure, those who never came to the table at great festivals without wonderful news, and who never refused a battle.

The fourth kind were seats of less prowess, and in them sat the knights who because of some accident could not take part in adventures. These four kinds of seats were in the great hall of the palace, which was all painted and decorated with ladies and maidens and other noble figures. In the middle of this hall was a thick column of jasper, made in three sections, and in the bottom of the third were thirty taps of gold and silver from which there continually ran rose water in which to wash their faces. At each tap hung a towel of clean white silk. In the middle part of the column were set beautiful mirrors to look in, and on the top part were carved these words:

"To all the knights errant who desire the honor of chivalry. I reveal unto you that love is the condition and the way which leads all to prowess and courtesy, and love is the resting place for all fatigue. As you desire honor and a name for prowess, serve love loyally and well, and hold love in your heart."

And all the knights errant should know these words well, those who came every morning to the column to wash and look at their faces, and to read what was written there. By such customs was the Tavola Ritonda known.

Around the seat where the king ate with many barons there was this custom: one who brought good news drank from a golden cup, but if the news were otherwise he drank out of silver. And the palace and the hall and the walls were all round, so that as they sat at the table all the men could see the faces of all the others. When they were here within, they were a circle, that is to say, one thing, and all were at one post and faithful to one sign. They were at the post of obedience and bore one symbol, the sign of love. All of them were knights in love, who lived and were named for prowess throughout the world.

From every country they came here, each one seeking to prove himself through deeds of arms. They proved themselves many times over until they were found so excellent that they could be received as knights errant. If they were not good enough, they set out on their own adventures as foreign knights, since they could not yet be called knights errant.

If one of them had the care of a kingdom or city or castle, he could not then be sworn, because the cares of avarice do not accord with prowess. Also a knight errant could not be married, because the responsibilities and the laziness of that do not encourage prowess. He should give up all thoughts of himself, and have no concern for income, riches, treasure, or anything that could impede his deeds of chivalry.

Now the story stops talking about King Artù and the knights of the Tavola Ritonda, and turns to Sir Tristano's deeds.

LXIII.

In this part the tale tells that when Tristano took leave of King Artù he rode on through the forest until he met Prezzivale lo Galese, who was pursuing the Beast Gratisanti. When he saw him, Tristano recognized him and summoned him to joust. They rode against each other and exchanged two great blows, but Prezzivale's lance shattered at once and Tristano struck him with such force that he sent him to earth, horse and all.

Then Tristano asked his name, and he said, "I am called Prezzivale, son of King Pellinoro of Gaules." Tristano also told his name, and greatly they honored each other; still they soon took leave and went their separate ways. Tristano rode back to the forester's hut where he had left Gheddino, and found him cured and in high spirits. They rode on together across the kingdom of Cornovaglia until they reached Dinasso's castle. Here they found Governale, who told Tristano what answer King Marco had given. They rode to the city of Tintoile, and when they arrived at the palace the king received them with great honor, embracing Gheddino many times and asking all about King Gilierchino and his daughter Isotta.

Gheddino replied, "Sire, by my faith, we are yours to command, by God's grace and for Sir Tristano's sake, who freed everyone there."

Then the tables were laid and they sat down to eat. At that moment Isotta the Blonde came into the hall. When she met Gheddino she greeted him courteously and asked about his sister Isotta, and Gheddino gravely answered all her questions.

Time passed, and Tristano could think of nothing, day or night, except how to find a way to speak with the queen, and he managed it finally so that they met one night to talk under a pine tree in the middle of the queen's garden. When they were together they embraced passionately, and grew faint with desire for each other. Isotta lamented that Tristano had abandoned her, but Tristano excused himself and promised that he had never been unfaithful. As the two lovers lingered there and made each other suffer with their quarreling, soon they were pacified by their great desire and by the pleasures of love. Then afterwards, whenever they pleased, they met below that pine to speak together.

They went so often that spies approached King Marco and told him, but he did not believe them at once. Still, to make certain of it, he thought of a plan. When evening came the king went secretly to the garden and climbed the tree, waiting and saying to himself, "I want to find out the truth of this," whether or not his wife Isotta were betraying him again.

After he had waited a little the queen drew near, coming through a little wicket gate from the palace; soon after, Tristano climbed over the cloister

wall and approached the pine. At that moment the moon rose, beautiful and bright, and when the two lovers looked at the shadow of the pine they saw the outline of a man, and they both were very suspicious.

At that, the queen, who was wise, stopped where she was and said, "Sir Tristano, I marvel greatly that you have sent for me at such an hour. You know the imprisonment I have suffered and endured because of you, and you know that I am accused of a great crime that never was or could be, a thing that could never happen for all the gold in the world, for I do not believe there is a lady in the world, nor do I hope to find one, who loves her lord more than I love mine. But there is only one way that the blame can quickly pass: where truth is, there truth should also appear to be.

"When my lord learns the truth of my loyalty, he will no longer believe evil counsel, but will love me more than anyone else; for in good faith I can truthfully swear that I have never given my love to any man except the one who had my virginity, nor will I ever, ever, do so.

"But if the king knew I were here now, he would have me burnt at the stake, and no one would be able to stop his suspicions. Now tell me at once why you have sent for me, for truly the hour is neither good nor seemly, and I will never meet you here again."

Then Tristano said, "My queen, well I know that you have suffered and endured imprisonment because of me, but that was not my fault. You know that you have had nothing from me but comfort and good counsel, because I hold the king's shame and honor as my own. He should well know that if I loved you with a guilty love I would never have given you to him, but would have kept you for myself.

"But the king does not believe what is obvious; instead, he believes those who slander me out of envy. Know that I sent for you because this has happened. I want to return to Petitta Brettagna, for it has been too long since I saw my wife Isotta, whom I love more than I love myself. The king of Petitta Brettagna has given me his kingdom: because of this, I want Governale, who has served me so well, to be the king of Liones. As you know, King Marco inherited a fifth part of my kingdom, and Governale cannot be king unless he possesses the whole kingdom. Thus I ask, when it pleases you, that you would persuade the king to give up his part, so that Governale can be king of Liones in Marco's service.

"I sent for you to ask you to make this embassy to the king, for I am afraid to speak to him myself."

The queen, hearing this, looked irritated, saying, "Tristano, Tristano, I will not take this message at all. I have heard that the one is dead, if ever he was born, who loves someone more than he loves himself. It would not be wise for me—this is not good counsel you give me—to take from my own husband to give to Governale. I will not do your errand. Instead, I make you a better suggestion: give the whole kingdom of Liones to my lord

King Marco, so that any time you are in need, he may have the means to serve you. In no way will I advise my lord to take from himself to give to another."

Tristano replied, "If you will not do this for me, I will ask someone else."

"Do as you please," said Isotta. "I will certainly never do anything to lessen the honor of the one I am responsible to."

Then they left each other, showing dislike in their faces, though in truth they were very sad that they had not been able to speak together of other, more sacred things.

The king, having heard their words, climbed down the tree, telling himself it was untrue that there had ever been an evil thought between Tristano and Isotta. He returned to his chamber to rest, and in the morning he got up and went into the great hall of the palace, where many barons and knights were gathered. He summoned Federumgotto, one of his counsellors who many times had accused Tristano, and struck him in the face with his glove, saying, "Alas, traitor, because of you I nearly lost my wife and my loyal nephew! I command you on pain of death that you leave here at once, and never again let yourself be found within the borders of my kingdom."

Then he called Tristano to him, saying, "Noble and dear nephew of mine, I have heard that you have from your wife the kingdom of Petitta Brettagna. Thus it seems to me that Governale, who has served you so well, ought to be king of Liones. I bequeath to him, from now on, all the rights which I may have to it."

Then Sir Tristano thanked the king over and over, and gave Governale the ring and the seal, and made him king of Liones. He sent him to King Artù to be crowned, for Artù ruled over all other kings, and it was from him that they received their first crowns. Governale accepted all, and set out to come before King Artù.

LXIV.

Now the story tells that as Tristano continued his stay at Marco's court the king, because of evil gossip and because of the way Isotta sometimes looked, became more suspicious every day. And so, to reassure himself once again, he contrived a trick. He had three rich beds prepared in one chamber, then said to Tristano, "Noble nephew, this would be a good time for us to have ourselves bled. If it pleases you, let us have it done together; it will make us healthier in body."

Tristano replied that it pleased him well, so the thing was done for King Marco, Tristano, and also Isotta. That day they all ate well of good and delicate food, and that evening they rested in the chamber, each in his own bed. After their first sleep, the king got up and went through the room, secretly sprinkling flour between Tristano's bed and Isotta's. Then he spoke quietly to Tristano, saying that it was his pleasure to attend matins, and left the room.

When Tristano heard this he sat up, full of desire to go to the queen's bed. But he looked at the floor and saw that it was all white, and said to himself, "This has been done with great skill, and is directed against Isotta and me." Still, as a valiant and dextrous knight, he cared nothing for it, but made a great leap from his own bed to Isotta's. The effort was so great that a vein reopened in his arm, and quite a lot of blood spurted out. Then after they had taken their pleasure and delight, he made another leap back to his own bed.

After a little while, the king came back with a great flaming torch in his hand. Looking at the floor he saw that the flour had not been disturbed, but he also saw that the beds of Tristano and Isotta were stained with blood, and that made him very suspicious.

In the morning, the king summoned before him the archbishop of the city, a very wise and ancient man who led the life of a saint. The king told him all about his suspicions of Isotta, and how because of them he wanted to have her burnt.

The archbishop said, "To accuse someone or to have a person killed out of suspicion is not lawful. You say that you are not certain of their sin. But if it pleases you, I will give you other holy and just advice."

The king replied that he would be glad of it, and would pay careful attention.

The archbishop told him, "Sire, I give you this counsel. Take your wife to Petrone Vermiglio, twenty-five leagues from here by sea, on the island of Matufer. Here it was that the six fathers and the great prophet went to do penance. Many holy relics and prophesies are gathered in Petrone Ver-

miglio, according to the writings of Carlone, and among these is a virtuous stone which will not let anyone tell a lie. When you reach the place, command the queen to lay her hand on that stone and swear that she has done no wrong. Then you will know for certain whether she is virtuous or not, for she cannot speak other than the truth.

"But if you would be even more certain, have her grasp the hot iron, because if she is telling the truth then the power of the relic will keep the iron from harming her. After this, you will be absolutely certain and sure, because the power of the stone at Petrone forbids that any one lie, not even within the distance from Petrone as ten times a man and a woman are tall: this is a true thing proven by more than a thousand people.

"However, I ask that you promise me this. If you find the queen guilty, you will not have her killed, for I do not want that she or anyone be killed as a result of my counsel. Rather have her put in prison and fed on bread and water."

The king was very pleased with this advice. Then the archbishop went to Queen Isotta, and told her what had happened, and how in ten days she must be ready to go to Petrone and prove herself. Isotta showed pleasure in her face, but in her heart she was more wretched and sorrowful than any lady in the world, because she felt very guilty. Well she knew that at Petrone Vermiglio one had to answer truthfully to whatever was asked, and otherwise could not open her mouth or say anything at all. She sent for Tristano and told him about all of the things the king had set for her to do. Sir Tristano thought a little, then said, "Lady, don't worry about anything, for I know how to arrange it that you will be completely safe, and that the burning iron will do you no harm. I will be on the island myself, disguised in such a way, and I will do such and such a thing under such and such conditions—and if this plan fails, I will resort to my sharp sword."

At that point, Tristano left the queen, armed himself, mounted, and sought leave of the king, saying he wanted to go and visit Duke Bramante, who had invited him many times. The king gave him leave to be gone for a month. Then Tristano rode to the port, to the house of a townsman who was a dear friend of his. Here he took off his armor, except for his sword, and equipped himself with everything he thought he might need. He embarked in a small boat all alone, and sailed to the island of Matufer, where Petrone Vermiglio was.

When the time came for the queen to be tested, King Marco, the archbishop, Isotta, and twenty old friars, abbots, and religious men left the city. When they reached the shore of Matufer, they met a pilgrim with a great hood over his head and a heavy staff in his hand, dressed in thick robes and wearing a great beard, and his face and person were all covered up. Nobody else appeared on the island.

When the queen saw the pilgrim she called to him, saying, "Servant of God, please help me off this ship."

The pilgrim waded into the water up to his thighs, took the queen in his arms, and carried her to dry land. Then all at once he embraced her tightly, then alone and barefoot disappeared into the dense forest. The king was very upset by this, but the archbishop and the others spoke to like wise ancients, saying, "Sire, don't be angry; truly he who embraced the queen is a sainted hermit, and did it to show that she is not guilty." (Here the words of Merlino are proved which say, "The ancients were brave, loyal, and pure, but since their time we know malice, treachery, and cruelty.")

At that point, the queen began to weep, for know that she was a very clever lady, and the king sighed a deep sigh, saying that never in his presence had such villainy been done. Then they continued on foot through the wild wood. As they approached the stone they encountered a madman, dressed in rags, with his hair in a heap, barefoot, and with a mottled face. This madman was crouching under a cross, and also held a cross of cypress over his body, for the woods were full of them.

When the king saw this, he marvelled greatly. The archbishop approached the madman and with great devotion knelt and kissed the cross which he held in his right hand, then the king did this also, and the other men. When the queen came forward the madman embraced her and kissed her, and the king was very upset by this. But the archbishop said, "My lord, there is truly no cause for alarm, for I believe this fool lives by the love of God and the Holy Spirit."

Then they came to the stone, and the king commanded the queen to lay her right hand on it and swear to tell the truth. The queen did so, saying, "I swear by this holy relic that no one has come to me and used my body basely except for King Marco, the pilgrim at the dock, and the madman you see here. As far as goes any other, I am clean and pure and loyal, and with no other person have I ever done wrong, except those I have named."

The king, because his mind was made up, did not accept this, but said, "Lady, you have sinned, and you must hold the hot iron."

Then the queen took the iron and held it in her hand a long time, so that the king gave up his suspicions. With great love he embraced and kissed the queen, and gave her three rich castles: these were Antriadin, Liorlinge, and Pontier del Monte.

Then the king asked the madman what he was called and the madman replied, "I have the name Tantri,[21] and if the "Tri" were put before the "Tan," I would have the name Tritan." But the king made no sense out of this, for Tristano spoke very secretly. Then the king, the queen, and their companions returned to the city of Tintoile, and Tristano stayed behind to make this excuse: "I already have the name Tritan. If the king had really heard me he would have cut off my head, for here near the stone I cannot lie."

Then Tristano uncovered his head and went to his boat, returning to the house of his loyal friend. He rested here for a day, then armed himself and set out on his way.

lxv.

The master of stories tells that when the next day came Tristano armed himself, mounted, and rode so that at the end of six days he arrived at the city of Teneson. As he rode up to Duke Bramante's great palace, the duke recognized him and received him with the greatest honor in the world, embracing and kissing him tenderly, because he had been waiting to see him for a long time.

Know that this duke was a pleasure-loving lord, who took great delight in life and merrymaking. After Tristano had been staying in this court for twelve days, one day he began to think about his love for the beautiful Isotta, and fell into the greatest melancholy in the world. He was so weighed down by thoughts of her that nothing could give him pleasure.

Then the duke, trying to lift his spirits, had brought before them a puppy he kept for his own great delight. It was called Petitto Araviuto, and had been nursed and nurtured by magic arts. No one alive knew how to describe its beauty, or say for certain what color it was: from whichever angle it was seen, it seemed to be of more colors than could be named. It was softer than silk to the touch, and was born of a brachet and a leopard. The maiden of the island of Vallone had given it to the duke, and in its bark were the sounds of all the birds that could ever be found. It was leashed with a fine silver chain which, when it was shaken, made the sounds of flocks of singing birds. Tristano, looking at the little dog, was filled with such delight that it drew him away from all other thoughts.

After Tristano had been at court a few more days, he got up one morning to find the duke and his barons all downcast. Then he heard a herald cry in the city that within two weeks time every person would have to pay the tribute claimed by the great giant Urgano the Hairy. Then Tristano asked the duke what all this meant and the duke replied, "Thirty-six leagues from here lives a giant who holds a fortress on a cliff above the sea. The fortress is called Fermoracco della Piemontana, and every year this giant, in his great pride, comes to claim as tribute a tenth part of all the animals that have been born in my realm."

Then Tristano cried, "By my faith and my loyalty, this is too much like

slavery!" Then he said nothing more, until it seemed to him that the right time had come.

Then he armed himself well and secretly mounted his good war horse and rode out of the city. He went all alone along the road he knew the giant must pass, and waited for him at a bridge across a wide river.

When the giant had collected the many animals that were his tribute, he came back along the road, herding them. When this herd approached the bridge, Tristano rode forward and would not let them pass.

Seeing the knight, the giant called out to him, "Who are you, vassal, who holds my booty off this bridge?"

Tristano answered him bravely: "By my faith, I am called Tristano of Cornovaglia, and I care nothing for your pride!"

The giant replied, "If you don't fear my pride you'll soon fear my mace, unless you get out of the way at once!"

Then he swung his mace, which weighed 130 pounds, and hurled it at Tristano. The blow missed Tristano, but it hit his horse on the shoulder in such a way that the animal died of the blow. Then Tristano was on foot, and very angry about it. He dropped his lance and took his sword in hand, and when the giant bent down to pick up his mace, quick as he could Tristano landed a blow that severed the giant's right hand just as it closed on the weapon. When he realized what had happened, the giant flew into a rage. He took the mace in his other hand and struck Tristano's shield with such force that the knight was knocked to the ground. Then Tristano grasped his good sword and began to attack the giant who was standing on the bank of the great river. As the giant was guarding himself with his shield, Tristano thought of a way to beat him by subtlety. He did no more with his sword, which was of little use, but instead pushed the giant with all his strength and made him fall into the valley of the great river. It was of that fall that the giant died.

Then Tristano picked up the giant's severed hand, gathered the scattered animals, and returned to Duke Bramante, saying, "Noble friend, here is Urgano's hand, which releases you from tribute forever and ever. Your Tristano has killed him for love of you, and it has cost me dearly, for he killed my good and loyal horse."

Then the duke embraced and kissed Tristano more than a hundred times, and gave him another good horse, the best and the noblest that then might be found. He also gave him Petitto Araviuto, which Tristano gladly took as a gift for Queen Isotta.

Then he took leave of the duke and returned to King Marco's court, where the king honored him greatly. Still, Tristano's love for the beautiful Isotta did not diminish, and he thought of nothing but how he could take delight with her. Great rumors about all this flew around the court, and King Marco and all the barons were aware of it.

LXVI.

The true story tells that as Tristano stayed on, living this way, one of the court counselors, a man called Mariadoco, gave the king this advice: "Sire, one sorrow is better than a thousand. Therefore, if you want to escape this sadness and give yourself peace, it would be good for you to do as the proverb says: 'Give the good share to the bad companion, and part ways with him.' If you want to bring your sorrow to an end, banish Tristano and Isotta out of your kingdom, and you will suffer no more unhappiness on their account."

Then the king, who was a man easily persuaded, acted on Mariadoco's advice. He commanded Tristano and Isotta to leave his kingdom at once and never return, on pain of perpetual imprisonment, because he would rather lose all than share part. Then with great sighs and lamentations Tristano and the queen rode out of the city and set out together.

As they rode, Isotta, who had cried as she came before the king, began to sing a sweet melody, and Tristano, who had sighed so heavily, began to laugh, saying, "God, we thank you for the good fortune you have given us. The king thinks he has done us great damage, but by my faith, he has never served us so well in his life!"

Then they rode into the great wilderness of Urgano. At the crest of a high hill they found a beautiful house. It pleased them very much because it had a lovely fountain, a garden full of wild and domestic plants, and was thirteen leagues outside of Tintoile: here the two courtly lovers decided to live.

Brandina rode out every day to the castle of Monte Albrano to care for their needs, and Tristano went hunting every morning until the hour of tierce, killing many beasts. When he returned, they had dinner, played a game or two of chess, and after midday they rested and took delight, not in bed, but because of the great heat they amused themselves on a giant table of cypress, very beautiful. And always when Sir Tristano slept, he kept his naked sword between Isotta and him as a sign of the cross, because the place was wild and uncivilized. The two lovers were very content to be together in such a way, and the birds went singing through the greenwood. Because of all this, Tristano and Isotta were very happy.

LXVII.

Now the tale here says that when King Marco found himself living alone, day and night he complained and lamented out loud, saying to himself, "Alas, Tristano, Tristano, now you may well be content. I was never so deceived as when I banished you from my court and from my city, on the advice of my false and evil counselor. If I had thought about it, I would have seen that it would have been better if you had banished me. I would be happier if you had stayed on as king and I had gone away with the beautiful Isotta. Oh, how my heart is sad for you!"

As the king stayed thus sorrowing, there came a holiday, and to pass the time he went hunting in the great wilderness, accompanied by many barons and knights. After they had been hunting for four days, the king spent most of one day following a single stag alone except for one companion. Because they were tired and it was very hot, they grew thirsty. Looking about, they found a stream of water, so they climbed down a bank to see where it was coming from. At the top of a slope they saw a beautiful fountain, and near it a rich and lovely house. Then the king dismounted and, giving his horse to his companion to watch, went to find out if anyone lived there.

As he came into the downstairs hall, he found Tristano and Isotta asleep, because it was midday, on their table; and between them lay the naked sword. Then the king was very puzzled, and marvelled to himself. He thought that the sword was between them as a symbol of chastity and, weeping, he said, "Alas, dear, noble nephew, alas my noble wife! How evil my thoughts have been, and how evilly was I advised! If you had any wicked desires, I think you would sleep in some other way. You would take your rest in another manner after pleasure and delight."

At that moment, a little ray of sunlight entered through a narrow window and struck the face of the beautiful Isotta, making her warm. This made her perspire, and made her face look like rosy milk, it was so flushed. The king gazed at her and thought about her great beauty, weeping heavily, sighing and trembling. Greatly he desired that angelic face.

Then he drew out an ermine glove and put it in the window where the sun shone through. Tenderly he kissed her, then with many sighs he went quietly out, returning to his companion and remounting his horse. He said nothing about all this, but met his barons and rode back to Tintoile.

There he sought out Mariadoco and stabbed him with a dagger, killing him at once, saying, "This I do to repay the evil and disloyal counsel you gave me against my lady Isotta and my loyal nephew Tristano."

This is how King Marco paid Mariadoco for the evil advice which he had given; thus will be paid all others who deceive their friends!

At that point, the king summoned Gheddino, Tristano's brother-in-law, and called Adriette and two other barons, and sent them to ask Tristano and Isotta to return to court. The four knights mounted and rode to the place where the lovers were staying and so managed it that they came back to the court. The king, when he saw them, honored them greatly, and for a time put all of his suspicions away.

LXVIII.

The true story tells that one day when King Marco and Tristano were in the great hall in the company of many other knights and barons, the winsome Isotta came through the chamber, attended by her ladies and maidens. She was dressed in a beautiful robe of delicate colors, and her blonde hair covered her shoulders and her back, as the fashion was. On her head she wore a lovely, dainty crown of gold and precious stones, and her face looked like a new rose, tender, chaste, and pleasing. She was as graceful as anyone could possibly describe, truly the most beautiful thing nature knew how to form. At that moment Gheddino, Tristano's brother-in-law, began to gaze at her, and refreshed himself in looking at Isotta. Seeing her so beautiful and of a loveliness so fine, he said to himself, "Never again could nature make a woman as lovely as this."

And he thought so hard about the beauties of Isotta, and they pleased him so much, that he fell madly in love with her. So strong and violent was this love that it struck him right through the middle of his heart. Suddenly a chill took him, one that made him tremble all over, and afterwards a wave of heat which, together with the chill, gave him the quartan fever, so that he nearly died. He couldn't eat or drink or sleep. So affected was his nature that he became very weak, and this happened because he loved and was not loved in return.

And in this be sure that Gheddino was a mirror to reflect all other lovers who love and are not rewarded for their love: Gheddino, loving so secretly and not being loved, was suddenly taken with fever so dangerous and wearisome that it brought him nearly to his death, and made him live in great fear and dread.

He thought to himself, "Am I joyful or not?" A steady melancholy gripped his heart and so depressed him that he lost all of his natural cheerfulness. Know that this quartan has three properties: the first is that it alternates

heat and cold, the second is that it comes slowly and lasts a long time, and the third is that it is very strong and must go away by itself; there is no doubt that it is a cruel and unpleasant disease. Thus the man who loves is stricken with this fever, along with three cold qualities which he has within himself: melancholy, pensiveness, and fear. But in him also is heat, that is, the faith and hope that he will receive recompense.

All this is made manifest in that the faithful lover trembles, and for good reason, for the blow of love is so strong it would send anyone to earth. No knight is so worthy that he dares wait for it, and there is no king who, receiving such a blow, would not cease dispensing justice; it countenances nothing except obedience. The blow is so strong that anyone who cannot stand it had better fly: this is because the two lovers are in one pleasure, and the pleasure is one love, and the two lovers become one thing, joined in delight and pleasure.

Thus Gheddino, as long as he could hope, did not die and did not recover, but only took comfort in hoping. That is to say, when loving the beautiful Isotta had worn him completely out, he would die. In this he shows that he who loves and is rewarded recovers and lives, but he who is not compensated for his love dies with no remedy. Thus know that it is for his own sake that he loves, and for his own sake that he feels desire. To love is to be chaste and selfless and think of nothing but the other's pleasure; to be courageous, and humble where need be, happy, generous, courteous, and joyous in temper. Simply to desire is to love in vain, and lovers who do this disgrace themselves and others and bring dishonor upon courtly love. They are of no use to themselves and no service to anyone else.

But Gheddino so loved the beautiful Isotta that he neither slept nor rested, drank little and ate less. Sir Tristano, who did not know where such an illness came from, was very grieved by it, and continually tended him and had him treated by the best doctors he could find, but none of them knew how to cure this infirmity. No one knew where it came from, but that was no marvel. The sickness of lovers is in a vein in the middle of their hearts; that is, it runs from the top of the heart through all the other circuits of the body, so that when the lover's heart is sad, all of the other parts of his body are dolorous and melancholy, too. And because the lover's sickness is stronger and more dangerous than any other, so it is more concentrated and more hidden.

Gheddino suffered from this lovesickness for three months, and nearly died. Seeing himself thus affected and in bad straits, he declared himself and wrote a letter, sending it at once to Isotta to let her know about his great torment. Isotta and Brandina together opened the letter to find out what it said. It said this:

LXIX.

To the queen of queens, lady of ladies, dearest and most noble, crowned with every nobility, pleasing star above all others, gleaming lily, fresh, frank sweet-smelling rose, new-blown flower, precious jewel, gem of purity, full of beauty, with all bounty and virtue ornamented, I, Gheddino, recommend myself to you. With humble prayers I beg of you, my lady Queen Isotta, sweet-smelling panther, refined salamander, that my short life be consoled. For you are the only one who can bring me from death to life, since for your gentle love I am about to die. Thus I ask for your comfort, for the brightness of your lovely face has put me so much in your power that truly I can find neither peace nor rest. Only to imagine your beauty has brought me to this state, because I cannot possess you. If I could possess you, I am sure I would recover my life.

"Now I am sending you my sword, and if you intend to comfort me, keep it, but otherwise send it back to me, for surely when I see it I will use it to kill myself, and then it may well be said that I had the evil fortune to love without pity."

When Isotta read the letter she was very upset by it, saying to herself, "Alas, traitor Gheddino, how could you think I would abandon Tristano for you or any other man who lives?"

But Brandina said, "I am sure, my lady, that this Gheddino deserves a strong reproof, but I wish that for now you would send him a kind word of comfort, and when he is better we can speak to him in such a way that he will think no more of such folly."

Then Isotta wrote a letter, and sent it to Gheddino. It said this:

LXX.

To you, Gheddino, son of the king of Petitta Brettagna, from me, Isotta, queen of Cornovaglia. I have received a letter from you and I have read it seriously and with great love. Now I send to you to ask that you be comforted, be of good heart and let yourself be happy, for when you are well I will speak to you gladly of things I will not speak of now."

When Gheddino read this letter, he was completely comforted, believing

that Isotta loved him with courtly love. He recovered very quickly, and always he carried the letter in his pocket, for it gave him great ease. Thus it went for about twenty days, until one day Tristano went to Gheddino's room to talk with him as he was used to do, and found him asleep, with Isotta's letter on the pillow beside him.

Then Tristano picked it up and read it at once, because he recognized his lady's handwriting. As he was reading it, he grew all dismayed and pale, saying to himself, "Alas beautiful Isotta, why have you deceived me like this? Alas, lord God, how can such a sin be?" Then he called to Gheddino as he was waking him and said to him, "Brother-in-law, brother-in-law, you have deceived me. I have confided so much in you, and you have betrayed me and killed me!"

At that, Tristano took his knife in his hand to kill Gheddino, and truly would have killed him at once, he was so angry and suspicious about the crime; but Gheddino, because he was so afraid, forgot that he was sick, and quickly threw himself out of the window. He fell into the garden, right before the king and queen who were playing chess together for their delight.

The king thought that Gheddino had fallen out of the window in his sleep, and at once had him carried inside and laid in a rich bed to rest, for the young man was all stunned.

But Tristano, for his great sorrow, lost his memory and could neither see nor feel ; he became like a man afflicted. He went then into the hall and put on all of his armor, and he was greatly tormented. The queen, when she saw him so sad and melancholy, asked him the cause, and Tristano replied, "Alas, Isotta, how can it happen that you have so deceived and betrayed me? Who could believe this, that you would leave Tristano and abandon him for Gheddino? Certainly, I cannot believe such wickedness. I would never abandon you for anyone in the world. Alas! Now I see that I have been led to such a point and such a condition that never again will my heart or my body know any joy or any goodness. I see that I am so wrought upon that I am nearly dead."

Such a lament did Tristano make to the queen that nothing like it had ever been heard. The queen tried to explain herself, to tell him truly and effectively how great the need had been, but Tristano was so inflamed with anger that he would listen to nothing she said. Full of torment, he left her and went to the main stable, where he mounted the first palfrey he came to. He went out of the city and rode day after day without eating or drinking until he came into a deep valley of the forest of Urgano.

Then he let his horse walk, threw away all his arms, tore his clothes, touseled his blonde hair, and disfigured his handsome face, and always, in his great sadness, made the greatest complaint in the world. He went naked and barefoot and neither drank nor ate; weeping and fasting sapped his natural strength; he lost his sense and recognition of everything, and came

to such a state that he pastured on grass. Once in a while, by some luck, he caught a beast with his bare hands and ate it raw.

He grew sunburnt, mottled, and thin, and was in such a condition that the mother who bore him would never have recognized him. Often he came to a certain spring much used by several shepherds. These men would sometimes give him bread and other things to eat, but sometimes they would beat him with their staffs. Tristano did not seem to notice whether he was treated well or badly, because he remembered nothing that had ever happened in the past, neither that he had been a knight, nor that he had done deeds of arms. He did not remember the beautiful Isotta or King Marco; he had lost his memory so completely that he did not remember anything that had happened in the world, and he lived like this more than seven months.

One day when he was at the spring with the shepherds, eight lions appeared, and the shepherds were so frightened that they fled, leaving their flocks. Only Tristano stayed behind with five big strong mastiffs. The lions attacked the sheep and ate as many as they wanted, and killed four of the dogs. The fifth dog, out of fear, came to Tristano and stayed beside him. Seeing this, Tristano picked up a big, hard, strong club and began to rain blows on these lions in such a way that he killed five of the eight, and the others fled into the wilderness. When the shepherds came back and found the dogs and the lions dead they marvelled greatly, and because of this gave Tristano more bread than they had ever given him before.

Tristano said nothing, but ate like a lunatic. Nonetheless, the shepherds began to think well of him and care for him; still he did not notice whether they treated him well and honored him or not. It was all the same to him.

While Tristano was living like this for seven months, neither King Marco nor Isotta nor anyone else knew what had happened. Everyone thought that Tristano had gone seeking adventures in a foreign land, although they wondered very much why he had not taken with him his good sword and his fine horse, as he always had before.

LXXI.

The master of stories tells how one day King Marco with his barons and knights went hunting in the great forest of Urgano. After hunting through the countryside for more than twelve days, King Marco went out alone one morning and came to the Fontana Serpilina, where Tristano lived with the sheperds. The king, who was rather tired, dismounted by the water to refresh himself. Looking around, he saw the madman there all nude, sleeping close by, and he was the most contemptible thing in the world to see. The king asked the shepherds who this wretched creature was, and the shepherds replied that it was a fool who had been living with them for some time. Then after the king had rested a little, he put a horn of ivory to his lips and sounded a great blast, so that his companions would come to find him.

At that the fool leaped up, all dismayed, and began to shout, "Catch, catch! Run, run! To them, to them!" He said whatever came out of his mouth. The shepherds, who feared that his noise would disturb the king, began to beat Tristano and strike him with great clubs, and they hit him so hard that—in a bad hour for them—they made him angry. No longer able to endure it, he threw himself among them and wrenched away one of their great thick clubs. He began to strike them, so hard and so angrily that he killed seven of the eighteen; the others all fled for fear of him.

The king, seeing all this, was much afraid. He took his sword in hand and leaped up on a corner of the fountain. In a moment Sir Adriette and the other knights arrived and asked who had killed these shepherds. The king told them, "That fool there, he killed them."

They all marvelled greatly at this, and Adriette asked the king to bring the fool to the city. They approached him, giving him bread and meat, and flattered and enticed him so that he followed after them. They rode back to the city of Tintoile, where no one recognized Tristano at all, he had altered so much. And he himself did not know where he was or where he went, either coming or going.

As Tristano the fool made his way through the city, he encountered a peasant driving a mule loaded with jugs of water; the man began to goad Tristano along with the mule as if he were also an animal. This made Tristano angry at once, so that he picked up the peasant and with great strength held him in the air and brought him down over the water jars, breaking his bones and his heart, killing the mule, and shattering all of the jars. He did all this just by holding the peasant in his bare hands.

When the king and the barons saw this, they marvelled at the great strength the fool displayed. With many bribes and with great care they lured him to the palace and closed him in the great hall. But whenever he got out

he went around tearing and breaking everything, and if he encountered horses and men he threw them to the ground, injuring the horses, and nobody dared to get in his way, for fear of feeling his club on their shoulders.

He still went naked, because whenever he was given clothes he would rip them off and throw the scraps around, and worry them with his teeth. He was all black and mottled, and it was the most disgusting thing in the world to look at him. Thus he lived in the city six days, until the king had the hall closed up. He did this to prevent more damage, for the madman had already killed more than twenty-four people with his fists and stones and clubs.

One day Tristano got away, escaping from the hall one morning and going down the stairs. He encountered a squire who was washing and grooming Tristano's horse. When the animal saw the fool, he knew him for his lord and at once began to paw and neigh and make such a disturbance that the attendant could in no way keep hold of him. At this the squire, thinking to show off his own strength, reached for the horse, intending to hold him by the bridle. But the beast reared, rising on his hind legs in such a way that he sent the boy dead to the ground, and broke the halter and reins by which he was tied to a great ring. At once he started after the fool, climbing seven steps of the staircase and putting both his feet on Tristano's shoulders. The fool picked up great stones which lay at hand and threw them at the horse, but the worst he could do did not drive the animal away. The horse stayed all the more at his side and showed great joy. Fleeing this, the fool went back into the hall and stayed there a few more days.

Another day, out of the queen's chamber came the little dog Idonia, a companion of the love potion. He began to bark when he saw the fool, for he also recognized him. He showed great joy and began to lick him, showing him the greatest honor in the world, and for the worst Tristano could do, the little dog would not leave him.

The king, when he saw how the dog was behaving, wondered at it. And because he looked a long, long time he began to recognize his nephew Tristano, knowing him for certain by a mark on his left arm. At that moment the king began to make the greatest complaint in the world, saying: "Alas, lord God, woe is me! I am so unfortunate that a dog has recognized his lord for his lord sooner than I have recognized my own nephew for who he is!"

Then he lifted the cloak from around his own neck and covered Sir Tristano with it, saying, "Alas, lord God! What have you come to, my nephew?"

When the barons recognized Tristano, they, too, began to make the greatest lament in the world, showing great sorrow, and thinking themselves blessed that they could touch him and treat him well. Then the king had him put in a chamber that was quiet and dark. He sent at once for the queen, who all this time had been the saddest lady in the world. From the day her Tristano had left her, she had not come out of her room, and she felt

very guilty because of the sorrow she had that he had left her in anger. She had no idea where he might have gone, and she wanted very much to see him and be near him.

LXXII.

In this part the story tells that when Queen Isotta came before King Marco he said to her, "Lady, see here my nephew Tristano. Do you see what he has come to and how he is living? Surely I can have neither joy nor gladness until he is cured and brought back to health, and so I recommend him to your care as much as I would myself."

Isotta, hearing that this was her loyal lover Tristano, felt suddenly faint, and was the saddest lady in the world to see him so dishonored. Still, she comforted the king for two reasons: because if she had charge of Tristano she thought she could cure him, and because she did not want the king to know her true feelings. She said to him, "Sire, I will do everything in my power to cure him for love of you."

Then Isotta had Tristano led to a room far from other people, and gave orders that no one enter the chamber except Brandina, who would guard him night and day. Then she had Tristano put into a comfortable bed, and made medicines to put on his head. She had him eat fine confections and comforting, restorative things; she gave him fine wine to drink, tempered with water, and so tended him day after day that he got back part of his memory and his health.

Then he began to look about. He gazed through the room and thought, "Where am I? Who am I? How am I here?" Then he began to wonder to himself, for he saw that Brandina was watching him, though he did not recognize her, and he saw that he was lying in a rich bed, but he did not know where. Then, somewhat bewildered, he asked, "Lady, for courtesy's sake, tell me where I am."

Brandina replied, "Certainly, sir. You are in the palace in the middle of Tintoile."

Then Tristano said, "In what manner or way did I come to be here? Am I at present a friend or an enemy of my lord and uncle, King Marco?"

Brandina answered, "Sir, you are his very dear friend."

And Tristano asked her, "Lady, who are you, tell me, who stays here inside with me?"

"Who are you who asks me such a thing?" said Brandina, and Tristano answered, "Surely I am called Tristano, the most unfortunate knight in the world."

Then she said, "Now know, Tristano, that I am Brandina, your loyal and faithful servant."

At that, Tristano remembered the beautiful Isotta. He said to Brandina, "I ought to love you very much for your faithfulness and loyalty, but I ought and can hate Queen Isotta just as much, she who has deceived and betrayed me. I never believed it could happen, that she could leave Tristano for Gheddino, for I would never leave her for any other person."

But Brandina said to Tristano, "You yourself speak great evil and great wickedness when you blame the queen for so great a wrong. She has a greater reason to blame you and weep for you than you for her. You have nearly killed her for no reason, for since you left she has not had one hour of happiness or well-being, but your mad belief has brought pain to you both."

"It is you who speak great evil," said Tristano, "because I read the letter Isotta sent to Gheddino, written in her own hand, and I read those words which are cut into my heart."

Brandina answered, "He who believes lightly will be deceived. Because you believed falsely and would not listen to any excuse, nothing came of it but evil. Well you know that I have always been loyal to you, that I have never done you any wrong or told you any lies. Therefore if you will listen and believe me I will explain everything that happened. And I swear to you, my dear lord, that I will tell you the truth point by point."

Then Tristano said, "Speak, Brandina. Surely there is nothing in the world you could say that I would not believe. But alas! Tell me the truth!"

Then Brandina told Tristano how matters stood, and how that letter had been written to give some small comfort to Gheddino, and not to do any wrong, or for any other reason. "And I promise you that the letter was sent according to my advice, since seeing that you loved Gheddino so much, we did not want to argue with him at that point, but so that he might recover, we gave him such words and such answers that he might never know scorn in Cornovaglia. And if you knew the pain and sorrow that Queen Isotta has suffered because of you, you would be certain that she is the most loyal lady in the world."

Then Tristano said, "Tell me the truth, Brandina, were all these things you just told me true?"

And Brandina again took an oath, and Tristano began to make the greatest complaint in the world, saying, "Alas, woe is me, oh sorrow! Alas that I have done my lady such a great wrong!" Then he asked, "That letter you sent, did it make Gheddino recover?"

Brandina replied, "Now know that when he understood that the letter was only written to comfort him, he left at once to go back to Petitta Bret-

tagna. And know that he was so burdened by his illness that he could not escape."

As they spoke together this way, King Marco came in with several other barons to visit Tristano. When Tristano saw him, he was very puzzled, for he had not yet gotten back all of his memory.

The king said, "Tristano, how do you feel now?"

Then Tristano began to shout, saying, "I don't know, I don't understand you, who is it? I don't know, there is nothing I can do, who is it? Where is my sword? Give me my sword!"

Then he lifted himself and tried to get out of bed. Thus the king saw that Tristano had not yet recovered his good sense and his memory, and said, "Surely I see that Tristano is much better, but he still is not cured, for he speaks of crazy things."

The king did not want to disturb him any more, so he left him there, commanding Brandina not to leave his side, and to stay beside him always.

The state Tristano was in then lasted two months and a little more; then he was cured, and began to ride out through the city. He was completely reconciled with the beautiful Isotta, and went to speak with her in secret many times. Rumors about this flew through the court and the king, when he heard them, began to wear an evil countenance. This situation made him very pensive, and he thought constantly of ways he might banish Tristano or even have him killed, so that he could be more certain of his lady Isotta, and not be so unhappy all the time.

LXXIII.

The true story tells that one day as King Marco was in the great palace attended by many knights and barons, his suspicion of Isotta grew so great that he summoned Tristano to him, saying, "Knight, you have behaved like an evil tree: the more you are cared for, the worse fruit you give. I therefore command you, on pain of your head, to get out of this kingdom. Take gold or silver as you please, but by the fourth day from now, you must be gone."

Then the king commanded that no one was to dare speak to Tristano, on pain of death, and from then on Tristano talked with no one except one knight errant who happened to be passing through Tintoile, Sir Dinadano, who was known as the wise man who would not love. He was brother to the Valet of the Ill-cut Coat, and to Sir Daniello, whom Sir Lancilotto had killed.

Tristano, seeing himself under such an order and treated with such disdain that no one would speak to him, had a ship provisioned with everything he might need, and went to take leave of the beautiful Isotta. As if the command had given them full license, they took great delight together; then afterwards they made the greatest complaint in the world. They sorrowed so much because in parting they also took leave of their hearts; that is, Tristano's heart left him to stay with Isotta, and Isotta gave hers to Tristano, because each thought more of the other than of himself. And in this sorrowful leave-taking, Tristano made a sonnet and Isotta made one, too. Tristano's says this:

Gentle queen, my leave-taking is so sorrowful,
And I have to do it against my will;
I suffer so much torment
That in truth life is hateful to me,
Because I leave you, rose vermilion,
From whom I receive all life and sustenance.
Therefore will I never be content
When I am far away from so noble a thing:
For when I spend but an hour away from your beautiful face
I have lost solace, joy, and laughter.
Therefore my sad heart soon will die

teous and wise, with lovely manners and great prowess; and you are beyond measure handsomer and better made than any other knight."

But Tristano answered, "Sire, you see that I do not ask her for myself, but for my uncle, Marco. I am not yet ready to take a wife, because I could not then be a knight errant; I could not obligate myself so much. As I've told you, I want her for King Marco. I don't refuse your kingdom; indeed, I accept it. I want to make Amoroldo's son a knight, then let his be the kingdom and the crown, for I give it to him."

The king, when he saw there was nothing else he could do, took Isotta by the hand and gave her to Tristano, saying, "I entrust her to you, because with King Marco she is badly matched; by my faith, he is not worthy of such a prize. I pray to God that she will soon be released from him."

At that, Tristano received Isotta, and knighted Gulistante, conferring on him his father's name, that is, Amoroldo. Then all the people played at arms to demonstrate their joy.

But that night as King Languis slept, he dreamed that his daughter was sitting on a throne of ivory and crystal and wore on her head a crown of gold and precious stones, while all the people did her great honor. And it seemed that Tristano came and took off the crown Isotta wore and threw it on the ground, and took off her robes so that she was naked, and put her in front of him and rode with her through every land. When morning came, King Languis summoned his astrologer, who was called Segrelos the Foreigner, that is, Sir Hugo. The king told him the vision, and he said, "Sire, know that if you send Isotta to Cornovaglia she will suffer the greatest dishonor in the world."

King Languis was very upset by this, but still he did not want to make Tristano angry. Still, according to what is found in the book of Sir Gaddo, the king's dream was true and sure, for it showed Isotta sitting on a throne of ivory and crystal, because she was, one could say, crystal in her beauty, polished as sapphire, colored like a lovely pomegranate, and pure, without blemish. She was the most beautiful, graceful, and charming maiden ever found, or whom nature ever made. She was ivory in that she was cool in her virginity; never had a wicked thought touched her heart. And the dream showed that Tristano took the crown from her head, which was true. As gold is superior to other metals, so the head is over other parts of the body, and so the virginity which Tristano took from Isotta is over all other virtues in beauty, charm, and courtesy. With her chaste manner, soft speech, and angelic glances she was a precious pearl, and was truly the most perfect in beauty that could be found, or who ever would come after.

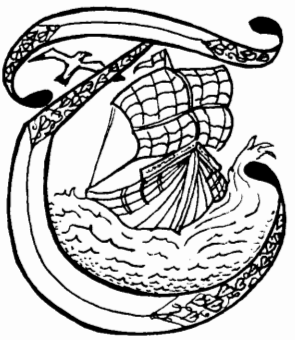
The dream also showed that Tristano stripped her naked, and this was true, for they took pleasure with each other and all was known between them and nothing was hidden. And each of them took a crown from the other's head, that is, the memory and the will, for they thought of nothing

else but of pleasing and delighting each other, and there never was anything that could shatter their love.

Staying in that court, Sir Tristano soon wanted to leave, so he had a ship well provisioned, and summoned his people. Queen Lotta gave Isotta crowns and jewels, and had put into the ship many robes, more than there were months in the year, all worked delicately in silk, and most of them in gold, with pearls and precious stones. She gave her a girdle decorated with eighty precious stones of which the least was worth more than 100 marks of silver. Then the king and the queen, with other ladies and barons, went with Isotta to the port, where the princess boarded the ship attended by sixty ladies, all daughters of counts and barons.

At that point, Queen Lotta called Brandina and Governale to her side, and gave them a little silver bottle, praying that they would guard it very well because it was full of a love potion. She told them to give it to King Marco and Isotta to drink on the first night that they went to bed together, and to guard it well so that no one else would taste it for any reason.

Then Tristano had the sails lifted to the wind. The weather was good so that in a little while they were well out to sea. Queen Lotta, staying behind, was so sad in her heart to see her daughter leave that she had her likeness drawn in a tablet, so well that it seemed as though nature had made it. A gentleman of Petitta Brettagna carved it, then the queen set it in her chamber in front of her bed, and from then on, whenever she went or stayed in her room she looked at it, and took great comfort and pleasure.



XXXIII.

The storytellers say that as Tristano sailed over the high seas with his companions, they were all celebrating and showing the greatest joy in the world. Tristano honestly and with great skill served Isotta in every way he thought she might want; like a loyal and courteous knight he saw to it that she had pleasure and solace so that she would not grow melancholy. He did not yet have one foolish or sinful thought about her, and it was as if she were his sister. Know that the book of Sir Piero, Conte of Savoia speaks of Tristano's loyalty, saying, "As the world is sustained by four columns, so Tristano had in himself four strengths, from which comes

the honor and the great worthiness of chivalry. It is certain that the world, that is the sky, earth, water, and air, is maintained by God the Father all powerful, son of the Virgin Maria, she of purity, humility, and faith; before giving birth virgin pure and pleasing; in giving birth virgin beneficent, glorified in the beginning, now, and at the end. And this benign lord, God the Father, who took on human flesh, is such that with his power and bounty and wisdom, he keeps and nourishes and satifies the world and its creatures. But in time, and speaking materially, the people of the world keep the world, and it is sustained by four columns; that is, loyalty, prowess, love, and courtesy.

These four virtues descended to Tristano, and are appropriate to the four elements, because the earth gives prowess, air gives loyalty, fire gives love, and water gives courtesy. These four columns were strong in the person of Sir Tristano, for he was the most loyal mortal who could be found: never was he guilty of treachery or deceit, rather he was deceived. Tristano was truly deceived in ignorance by the love potion, a bond which constricts the heart, the will, and the mind, so that one can do nothing but love the one the potion has bound him to, even if he never before had any guilty thought. And so the loyal Sir Tristano is excused of all causes, for he did not ask to drink out of desire for the potion itself, but asked because he was thirsty, and by mistake the love potion was given to him.

Sir Tristano's second quality was courtesy and largesse. Never did he refuse anything that was asked of him, and he never desired a crown for the sake of lordship. He wanted to be a knight and not a king, in order that others might have cause to command him more powerfully and make demands on his chivalry. Tristano was generous in what he gave, and courteous in what he did not take.

The third quality Sir Tristano had was love and charity, in that he loved everyone in his essence, and never hated or envied anyone. He was sympathetic, and gave compassion where it was needed.

The fourth column which upholds the world is prowess, and this truly did not fail in the person of Sir Tristano, for in him was prowess with great humility. He endured much, and never became too angry, though he could of course become angry in the way a knight must to endure. Thus it could truly be said that Tristano had prowess without meanness or deceit, love without envy, largesse and courtesy without avarice or villainy. Thus he showed that he was from first to last worthy of courtly love. The holy scripture spoke of this when it said that none can or ought to be content in this world, or perfect; but Sir Tristano, being so handsome, noble, rich, and gentle, was the most unfortunate knight in the world, for he did not have one happy hour that he did not also have a day of sorrow and care.

XXXIV.

As the story tells, Tristano had been travelling with his companion four days on the high seas, and when the fifth day came, they sat down at the chessboard after dinner, to play as they usually did. They played there most of the day. It was very hot because of the season and the seawater, so that after they had played for such a long time they wanted something to drink, and called for wine to be brought. Then Governale and Brandina went to a cabin of the ship where clothes were kept, and by mistake they took the flask that held the love potion and gave this to Tristano and Isotta to drink. Afterwards, when Governale and Brandina took the flask to put it away, they suddenly realized that it was the one Queen Lotta had entrusted to their care. How miserable they were when they saw what they had done! Governale said to Brandina, "Our sorrow is worth nothing, for what is done cannot be undone."

Then Governale, because of his great anger and pride, threw what was left in the bottle against the ship's planks, saying that he did not want to keep it. At that moment, Idonia, a little dog of Isotta's, licked that scattered potion, and forever after was one of the companions of the two loyal lovers, and never left them in her whole life. After they had died and were buried, on the third day she was found dead on their grave. So well-made was that potion and so able to cause love that just smelling it bound Brandina and Governale to Tristano and Isotta completely; they could never fail the two lovers, so tightly had the potion bound them together. Here says a doctor that Tristano, having Isotta, Governale, Brandina, Passabrunello, and Idonia, had the most beautiful lady, the most faithful and loyal attendants, the strongest horse, and the best little dog of any baron in the world.

And there where the potion was spilled arose a vapor and a silver-colored foam, and wherever it scattered it clung so tightly that it could not be scraped up by all the iron in the world. I have heard that that place on the ship never wore out because of the power of that potion. Another book tells that the potion was made of such a strong powder and of so many precious stones that if you guessed its worth, it would be more than a hundred marks of gold.

When Tristano had drunk the potion, he marvelled very, very much, because he could no longer control his thoughts or his will in any way. In the same way my lady Isotta was inflamed, that is, toward him. They gazed at each other, and as they did, each one recognized the desire and the will of the other. At that point, they forgot the game of chess, for when Tristano meant to move a pawn many times he played the queen, and Isotta, thinking to play the king, moved the knight. They had confused the game so much that each one thought himself beaten, and they were so taken by love

that the smallest move on the chessboard seemed to them the greatest.

All of this happened because of the love potion, which was so well made that it was no wonder their hearts were one thing, but it was marvellous that their hearts did not actually leave their places and join together to become one in form as they were one in will. For know that if this potion had been tasted by a hundred creatures all of diverse natures, such as Christians, Saracens, lions, and serpents, all would be made into one thing and never would they abandon each other. Further, it is no wonder that the hearts of the two young lovers were constrained so; the marvel is that the two hearts did not break in pieces and come back together as one thing. Now, each gazing into the other's amorous and pleasing face, they could not get enough of staring at each other. Know that the potion had been made so to work on carnal delight and pleasure that no matter how many knights and squires or ladies and maidens might be lovable, Tristano and Isotta would not give them so much as one intemperate glance or thought, for the potion was made to compel nature, and to set the reason under the will, and awake the will to pleasure.

It was as if one chain bound the hearts of the two lovers so that the two became one heart, that is, one thought, and of the two bodies made one will. Whatever pleased Isotta delighted Tristano, and whatever Isotta wanted, Tristano also desired; whatever one of them despised, the other also hated. The two lovers had one life and went to one death, and it is believed now that the two souls dwell together in one place.

At that point, the two lovers did not trouble themselves with many words, but left the chess game and went into the ship's cabin. Tristano said, "My hope, Isotta, delight of my thoughts, what has come over me to make me think now that I love you more than I love myself?"

Isotta answered, "Tristano, my delight and my consolation, my refuge and the life of my heart, if you love me, then I love you with all the desire of my heart, and as much more as I can, I love you." Then they embraced and kissed, and lay down on a rich silken bed. They stayed a long time in solace and delight, with no thought for anything except what was happening; it was a great sadness for them, for there where it is better to make a long argument, in a short time the quarrel was contested. In this contest without crowning[17] Tristano received much from Isotta, and turned the honor of her youth into the sweetness of love. Each was content with other, and thus was the love begun that was perfect in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end.

Brandina, when she saw what had happened, said to Governale, "Alas, we are all ruined, for King Marco will not find his wife to be truly a virgin. I am certain evil will come of this!"

Governale replied, "Leave it to me, and I will make such a plan that King Marco will not notice the lack. You must be secret, and not tell any of the

And leave me, because I can't be here
With you, who seem like paradise to me.

Isotta's sonnet says this:

O leafy date tree, O gentle love, what will you do?
O that I could go anywhere with you!
Love for you consumes me,
And when I do not see you I cannot rest.
For courtesy, you ought to take me with you,
For the great desire I have to see Queen Ginevara,
King Artù, and the other knights.

At this point, the queen gave Tristano a ring that the high prince Galeotto had given her, a ring so powerful that anyone looking into it could not be held by enchantment, nor could he be harmed by any work of magic.

Then Tristano and Dinadano rode out of the city of Tintoile and began their journey. At the gates they encountered a boy who was just getting out of a small boat. This was Alcardo, fraternal cousin to Queen Isotta, who had come from Irlanda so that Tristano might dub him knight. Tristano, who recognized him, showed him great joy and honor, and asked him to come along. Together they went in a galley over the high seas and arrived in the kingdom of Affraudis.

Riding through the great plain of Merloens, Tristano sorrowed over his parting from the beautiful Isotta, and thought about how he had left her so unhappy, and wept and worried over his great love. Sir Dinadano, who was a knight of many words who cared nothing for love, reproved Tristano, saying, "Knight, you have a head full of crickets to let love into your heart, for you ought to know that love is a thing which cuts short your days, dims your brain, and steals your memory and your reason. It is for that cause that the great masters say that love has four traits: he is naked, he rides without a bit, he wears a blindfold, and he shoot arrows. Thus I want you to know that his nakedness shows he cannot defend himself from any danger, his horse with no bit signifies his unchecked ride toward death, and his blindfold shows how he fails to see the perils that shorten his life. Finally, that he goes shooting implies that anyone who is loved or who truly loves is wounded, so that if he is wise, he becomes a fool, and if he is happy, he becomes sad, because love carries away the heart of the lover, and the man in love must go about sad and worried like one who has no strength because he has no heart."

Sir Tristano, who was in love, replied, "Sir Dinadano, you surely speak the truth. Love has the four properties you say, but you have not interpreted their significance correctly. That gentle love is drawn as a naked figure

shows that he wants no cloak or other encumbrance, nor any impediment that might hold him back, for he wants to be free and quick, lively and always ready to go, with no thought of avarice or cruelty, nor any thought that could lessen the power of high delight. For the same reason love wants no bit, for that would be an impediment, and he wants to be free to please the one he loves. And he wears a blindfold to show that wisely and chastely he sees nothing that could distract him from pleasing the one that love has set over him. He shoots arrows to show that he is generous and courteous, without avarice. Whoever follows love ought to be generous to spend, generous to give, courteous in speech, in his comings and goings, and in his speaking and looking. When he sees that this is so, gentle love accepts the heart of his noble servant, so that the lover will be happy and joyful and consoled."

At that, Dinadano, who was disenchanted with love, felt a great sadness. He turned his horse, saying to Tristano, "Alas, lord God, how can it be that love and the act of loving might console anyone? I saw with my own eyes that because of your love you went mad and left Tintoile all naked, and were in such a state that no one recognized you except the dog Idonia. This is the reward and the benefit you received for loving well!"

Tristano, listening to these words, said, "Dinadano, what you say is true. A lover must sometimes suffer bitterly. But he is so greatly rewarded and receives such benefits that it makes all past pain vanish."

"I don't agree with this," said Dinadano, "Because the pain of the lover is great and the delight is little, and the evil is a hundred times greater than the happiness, so that one tiny pleasure gets you a thousand pains."

Tristano answered him, "Dinadano, Dinadano, the pain is nothing compared to the great delight you hope for, because one great pleasure makes a hundred sorrows vanish out of mind."

Then Dinadano turned to Alcardo, saying, "You, which one of us do you agree with? Speak, by your faith for the lover or the non-lover. Say how it seems to you, and God be your savior."

Alcardo replied, "My lords, I will say how it seems to me, but I am not yet wise. Still, as I see it, I say that no one, be he of whatever condition you please, can increase in reputation or worth if he does not feel love, and without love, nothing can be perfect. The man in love thinks of nothing but serving and pleasing, but the non-lover does not love himself and does not serve others, like the dog who stands in the straw and lets no one take any, even though he can't eat it himself. That is to say, the non-lover does not feel the sweetness of love, and is jealous of the lover."

When Alcardo had said these words, Dinadano looked around and said very spitefully, "Sir Alcardo, Sir Alcardo, you have broken a lovely silence and have tried to talk like a philosopher. Now I am convinced that in Irlanda there are masters of this science, so full of sentence have your pro-

nouncements been. But it is of no use, for the will comes and overpowers reason, and praises like one who praises the market, for if you were not already a lover, you would not so praise love. I see you are strong of will and weak in reason, for you have said you want to be a knight errant, but it seems to me you will go mad when love maddens you. But it doesn't matter: to such meat, such a knife. Love will do for you what he does for all the desperate ones who become impoverished, and thus die."

Sir Tristano, hearing all this, laughed the loudest laugh in the world. He took great pleasure and delight in Sir Dinadano's words.

Riding on, they entered a thick and dangerous forest in which they found no villa, house, or castle, so that they had nothing to eat for a whole day. When evening came they took refuge at the crest of a high hill, but couldn't sleep for fear of wild beasts. The forest was full of lions, dragons, serpents, and all manner of savage animals, so that they stayed on their horses all night because of their great fear.

When day came they rode until the hour of sext, then looking at the summit of a high mountain they saw a fine, strong fortress. They approached it by means of a steep slope, and as they came near they saw, at the top of one of the towers, a very black watchman who was looking out over the countryside, holding in his hand an ivory horn. They saw that at the entrance to the fortress, at the gate, there were two huge chained lions, and in front of the gate was a great column of vermilion marble. At the top of the column was a silver bell with a fine golden chain, and in the column itself were carved these words: "If any knight comes this way who is so ardent that by his own force he sound this bell, he will have to fight the lord of the fortress. And if by his prowess he is victor he will become lord, for he will have conquered this fort and its holdings, and will have set free the thirty-six knights who are here imprisoned forever." This is what the words on the column said.

LXXIV.

Now if anyone should ask me what that fortress was called and by whom it was maintained, I would tell him that it was called the Fortress of Dianfer, and the forest around it was called the Wasteland of Lionferfero, and its lord was the maddest giant in the world, a creature called Lucano the Great, brother of Urgano the Hairy and of the two other giants killed by Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto in the Valle Pericolosa, as this book will tell farther on. All four of these giants were the off-spring of a giantess and a lion.

When the knights errant came close to the fortress, Dinadano begged Tristano not to be so eager as to ring that bell, advising him that they should ride on. Tristano paused, thought a little, then said, "Alas, Sir Dinadano, we would be very cowardly if we rode on without discovering who is the lord of this place."

Dinadano replied, "Sir, my lord Tristano, we have had bad luck yesterday and today. We have had nothing to eat and we have passed a foul night. You are not as strong as you ought to be for a fight, if one should be necessary. Thus we should get out of here in great leaps, so we can find a place where we can refresh ourselves."

Tristano said, "Dinadano, you know very well that this place is a wilderness, and is not yet patrolled by King Artù or any of the knights errant. If it were, we would have here a habitation furnished with all that custom requires. Besides, I want very much to find out who the lord of this place is."

Then he spurred forward, strongly and with a good will; he came to the bell tower, and rang the bell vigorously. As soon as the sentry in the castle turret heard that sound, he blew a blast on his ivory horn, and at that sound the lord of the fortress hurried to arm himself. He covered himself with armor of tanned leather that weighed more than four hundred pounds, took up his shield and mace and came to the meadow.

First he encountered Dinadano. He took him by the nose-guard of his helmet and lifted him off his horse and carried him easily to the castle wall. Tristano, seeing the size of the giant, who was taller on foot than he himself was on horseback, and the size of his mace, which weighed more than 300 pounds, was terribly afraid, and truly sorry that he had ever rung that bell. But even so, he rode forward ardently and shouted at the giant, "Knight, let my companion go! I'm the one who rang the bell! I, not he! Now I summon you to battle. Come on!"

At the sound of those words Lucano left Dinadano and came toward Tristano, and Tristano rode against him. Tristano struck the giant's shield with his lance, which shattered to pieces, for that shield was harder than stone. Then the giant tried to hit Tristano with his mace, but Tristano par-

ried the blow so that it fell to one side. Nonetheless, the stroke fell on his horse's shoulder and sent the animal dead to the earth. Tristano, finding himself on foot, was very worried. He took his sharp sword in hand and tried to hit Lucano on the helmet, but found he could do him no harm.

Lucano struck Tristano's shield with great force, and broke it all to pieces, fracturing his left arm and sending him a lance's length through the air. When Tristano felt that heavy blow, he almost died of it. But then, in anger, he grasped his sword and, wounded thus, roused himself to return to the encounter. He feinted as if he would strike the giant on the helmet, then quickly made the blow underhanded and thrust the point of the sword into his throat, between helmet and collar. The blow was so strong and skillful that Lucano fell to the ground and died right then and there.

After Tristano had delivered that blow, the companions went to the gate and killed the two lions, then entered the fortress where they found no one but the sentry and a gentle lady named Agretta whom the giant had held there for his pleasure. She was not of the race of giants. Then the lady led Tristano to the great tower where the prisoners were. Tristano unlocked it and led forth the thirty-six prisoners. All of them were very noble knights from different countries. When the lady saw Sir Alchino of Londres, her husband, whom the giant had imprisoned, she was very, very happy, and gave many thanks to God and to Tristano.

Tristano stayed there that evening, in great pain because of his arm. He tied it and set it as well as he could, then afterwards ate a great deal of meat and fowl.

Then Tristano gave Sir Alchino the fortress and all of its holdings. Afterwards, in the morning, he mounted Alcardo's horse, and Alcardo went on foot or rode behind Sir Dinadano. They went on through the wild forest.

Know that Sir Tristano had in this world, in his career, five principal horses. The first was a fine and noble bay called Gulistardo; this was the one given him by Bellices, the daughter of King Ferramonte. The second was dark and was called Passabrunello. This one was the best in the world, and was given him by King Marco. The third was white, or actually, iron-gray, and was called Piantagiorno, given by Duke Bramante. The fourth was black, and called Brunfort; this one Fata Morgana gave him. The fifth was gold as grain and was called Giuriando, given to him by Sir Inamante of the Valle Bruna.

And as Tristano and Dinadano rode on in this manner, "Alas, God," said Dinadano, "If you listened to me, Tristano, you would not have lost your good steed, and your arm would not have been broken."

But Sir Tristano replied, "Dinadano, Dinadano, although I am not glad of those things, because they happened I was able to make this part of the country secure, and set free all those noble knights who were in prison."

Then Dinadano said, "Let us ride faster, so that we can get out of this

wasteland. And I beg of you that we do not discuss love, for when I reason about it, I find that it displeases me very much."

Tristano, laughing, said, "It is all right with me if we don't discuss love, since you don't want to."

LXXV.

The true story tells that they rode along this way until evening, when they met an armed knight, accompanied by hounds and other dogs, who was going hunting. Upon seeing him, Dinadano challenged him to joust, and they spurred toward each other. The knight, who was called Sir Spinogres, was a nephew of King Bando of Magussir; he struck Dinadano with such force that he knocked him off his horse. After that, even though his arm was badly broken, Tristano jousted with Spinogres and defeated him.

Seeing himself bested, Spinogres approached Tristano and, taking his hand, asked him politely to reveal who he was, and Tristano told him. When he heard that this was Tristano, the knight so praised for prowess and all excellence, he honored him greatly, and gladly invited him to be a guest at his stronghold, the fortress of Prougno. Sir Tristano accepted the invitation, for it was very late. At once they rode toward the fortress, Dinadano and Alcardo going before and Tristano and Spinogres riding after. Now Sir Tristano was telling the knight all about the controversy between himself and Dinadano, laughing loudly all the way and telling the story of Dinadano and his condition, and how they argued together so much about the ways of love. Tristano said Dinadano scorned love more than any other knight in the world.

Spinogres, who was a very playful knight, said, "Sir Tristano, I boast that tonight I will give you a happy supper, and an evening of much delight, because I have a young daughter who is very quick and bright. I will tell her all about Dinadano, and I'll tell her to act as if she is in love with him, to find out what he will say."

Sir Tristano said he was delighted with the idea. When the knights arrived at Spinogres' castle, he summoned his daughter and told her what he wanted her to do with Dinadano, and she, a wise maiden, learned her part well. After a little, the maiden joined the knights and said to them, "My lords, the tables are set out, and if it pleases you, you may eat."

The knights answered that they were ready. The maiden had water brought, and after they washed, they went in to eat. Spinogres' daughter had Dinadano sit at the head of the table, then had the food brought in. All the bowls and utensils set before Dinadano were elegant and new, and she had the largest capon given to him. When they had eaten the boiled meat, the roasted meat was brought, cranes and peacocks and pheasants.

All the while the maiden served Dinadano in an honorable and seemly way, casting her eyes toward him over and over. Gracefully she carved for him and took his cups and rinsed them, speaking no words. As Dinadano became aware of such great favoritism, he became very suspicious, saying to himself, "The enemy of God is subtle, and the maid is very beautiful and charming. I could easily fall in love with her." Then he said out loud to her, "Lady, maiden, leave me. Go and serve your father. I don't need all these services you do me, and it is not fitting that you show me so much honor. You are far, far too ready to do more than anyone asked you to do. Go on, go serve your father, and do him the greater honor."

Then the maid replied, "Sir knight, eat well, it is right that you should. It is discernment to show honor where honor is merited. I well know that you are accustomed to chivalry, and are a very fine lover, and so I serve you gladly."

"Lady, lady," said Dinadano, "Great virtue has the one who can tell a lover from one who scorns love (that means the free from the lost). But I can well see there is no such virtue in you. You have missed the mark, for, by my faith, I am not a lover, nor do I ever want to be, nor am I any friend to love. And because it seems to me that you see so badly, I reject your friendship entirely. I neither need it nor desire it."

Courteously and prudently the maiden replied, "I know you are only saying these things so you won't wear me out, but truly, to serve you gives me great delight. It is my pleasure to be obedient to you and to all noble knights, since I am not beautiful."

Then Dinadano said, "By my faith, the more beautiful you were, the less hope you would have." Then he arose from the table at once, saying, "I am determined that you will not do with me what Eva did with Adamo. She gave him such things to eat that he was miserable ever after. You could do the same to me with these good services you do me: you could make me fall into such a trap that I would be sad forever."

Spinogres said to him, "Dinadano, remember that this girl is my daughter. If she pleases you I will give her to you for a wife, because it seems to me you are beginning to love her."

Dinadano answered, "Surely, you would not sell me this merchandise! I desire only that this piece of goods remain yours. Too dearly are you pleased to sell me this supper, for I want you to know that the worst evil there is, is the one which a man does to himself. Therefore, kind host, if you want

to be paid for your goods, reckon the bill at no more than three times its worth, and don't inflate it so much. Don't try to marry off your daughter by means of your game meat and your hospitality."

At these words Sir Tristano and the others began to laugh the loudest laughs in the world. And when they had debated together for a while, Sir Dinadano said, "Noble host, when it pleases you, I would like to go to bed."

Then a squire was commanded to show him to his room. The boy did so, leading him into a luxurious chamber in which there were two fine, rich beds. When Dinadano got into bed, he very quickly fell asleep. Then Sir Tristano and Alcardo came into the room, and Tristano very quietly lay down by Dinadano and put out the light. Then he began to kiss and embrace the sleeping knight, so that Dinadano woke up and said, "Who are you, touching me like this?"

Then Tristano, in a very soft voice, said, "I am the maiden who loves you and desires your love with all my heart."

Dinadano, when he heard these words, really believed that this was the maiden. He jumped out of bed at once, shouting, "By bad fortune, what whoredom is this? May the devil take such a host and such a hostel and whoever brought us here!"

Then he ran out of the room shouting, and Spinogres, who had not yet gone to bed, hurried from his rooms and said, "What is it, knight?"

Dinadano said, "It is that evil baggage, your daughter, who has attacked me in my bed!"

Spinogres marvelled much at this, and said, "That can't be!"

Then Dinadano led him to the room, and when they came to the bed they found Sir Tristano there, enjoying the biggest laugh in the world.

Spinogres laughed heartily, too, and said, "Dinadano, it seems to me surely that love has weakened your brain, or the power of the wine has risen to your head, when you can't tell a man from a woman!"

Then Dinadano was badly irritated, and said "Tristano, Tristano, you ought not play jokes on people, but mind yourself, you who go begging and weeping through the world because of love. And you mock me because I don't want my reason dominated by my will! You who have the fault had better not praise it, for more than a hundred times it has brought you near death."

Tristano begged his pardon, saying, "I would never have done anything to wrong you on purpose. I must have done it in my sleep."

And Dinadano answered, "By my faith, ever since the day you went to Irlanda, one could say you've been asleep or out of your mind. Because of your love you have given up kingdoms and provinces, and acted against God and against your uncle, King Marco."

Tristano replied, "Sir Dinadano, I beg your pardon, and promise you that I will never again speak to you of love except at your command."

Then Dinadano, still indignant, went to lie down beside Alcardo, but

Tristano was not upset with him. When the next day came the knights armed themselves to great advantage, and Spinogres gave Alcardo a fine and noble palfrey. Then they mounted, took leave, and went on their way, but Dinadano was still not speaking to Tristano, out of disdain.

LXXVI.

The masters of stories tell that as Tristano, Dinadano, and Alcardo rode on across the great plain of Matuvana, at the hour of sext they met an unarmed knight who greeted them courteously and said, "My lords, I am sure that you have not eaten all day, so if it pleases you, come into my tower here, where you can rest and refresh yourself."

Tristano, hearing such a lucky invitation, accepted it, and rode with the knight toward the fortress, which was named Fregulla Vittoriosa. Arriving, they saw that the walls were encircled by a deep river called Tendorubia. Once inside, they were courteously received: the tables were quickly prepared and water was brought for their hands, then they sat down to eat.

As they ate, the knight of the fortress, Sir Oris L'Aspro, watched Tristano very closely until, from so much staring, he recognized him. Then he gave him a look of great hatred. When he noticed this, Tristano said, "Good host, why do you look at me like that? What are you trying to do? Tell me for courtesy's sake."

Then said Sir Oris, "By my faith, I stare at you because you are the man who has done me the worst and greatest shame of any knight in the world. But do not think about it, for all that. Eat freely and with a good will, for I shall show you nothing but honor and kindness while you are my guest. But once you are outside this fortress I swear I will give you your death or take mine from you. This has to be, because of the great insult you have done me."

Tristano then answered very courteously, saying, "Look, my good host. By my faith I do not remember what I have done against you, or even that I might have done anything to displease you. By my faith, I am very sorry and ashamed of any such thing I might have said or done."

Sir Oris said, "Knight, I know in truth that you are Tristano of Cornovaglia, who killed Sir Sigurano, my own brother, for I saw this myself at a tournament in Irlanda."

"By my good faith, knight," Tristano replied, "I do not remember this,

or any part of what you tell me. Besides, what a man does in the general mêlée should not be held a shame and a dishonor. May I not have from you peace and respite?"

"By my faith," said Oris, "No. Not until I have done to you what you did to my brother."

Then Dinadano, who had not spoken to Tristano all day because of the tricks he had played on him the day before, said, "Good host, I will give you some advice which you have not asked me for. I advise you not to risk your own life on behalf of a dead man, and, when you can have peace, not to seek war—especially not with a knight who is more powerful than you. For know that the dead rest with the dead, and the living had rather not die. Out of this desire to avenge your honor, you will only make matters worse. This is great wisdom: when you see that your enemy is stronger than you, pretend you don't see him and go on your way, and wait for some other means of vengeance."

But the knight replied, "By my faith, I will avenge the death of my brother with all my power, for it would be a great dishonor to me not to do so."

Dinadano said, "My noble host, you think too much of dishonor. It would be better if you thought of the danger."

After the knights had eaten, Tristano said, "Good host, I am leaving. I commend you to God, and thank you very much for the honor you have done my companions and me. Many times over I ask for your peace and your pardon."

Then said Sir Oris, "A sharp sword is all that can make peace between you and me."

Dinadano responded, "Good host, it seems to me that you have lost your mind entirely, or else you have been badly advised. I have tried hard to make you see that in fighting for your vengeance you will make two wrongs out of one."

At that the knights got on their horses and set out at once. Sir Oris, who remained behind, quickly armed himself and called for his horse. He rode after Tristano, and when he overtook him shouted, "Tristano, guard yourself!"

Tristano, seeing the knight, readied himself for a joust. They rode toward each other with their lances lowered, and delivered two great blows. Sir Oris hit Tristano so hard that his lance shattered, but Tristano hit him so hard he sent him to earth. Then even though he saw he was beaten, Sir Oris got back on his horse and grasped his sword, striking Sir Tristano heavy blows across his helmet from behind, once, twice, and more. Tristano just looked at him and rendered him honor. Only after he had long endured the great outrage and the pride that Sir Oris displayed did he draw back and say, "Here is iron against iron and strength against strength."

Then he put his hand to his own sharp sword and struck Sir Oris with such power and strength that he knocked him off his horse, again seriously

wounded. It was a blow and a wound that would be the death of him.

And Dinadano said, "Good host, now you have more shame and more harm than you had before."

Then they left and continued to ride through the great forest. Dinadano was still not speaking to Tristano.

LXXVII.

They rode all that day through the great forest of Cerveroiche, all along the wide river called Temeso, and at the hour of vespers they met a damsel on horseback, a lady named Tessina. When she saw Tristano, she recognized him as a noble knight. She rode up to him and, taking his horse by the bridle, said, "Sir knight, for courtesy's sake, I require a boon of you, one that I will ask you for."

Then Tristano, to make a joke and force Dinadano to speak, said, "Lady, ask it merrily and boldly, for I am not such an unloving knight that I would refuse a boon to a maiden or a lady."

Then the lady thanked him warmly, saying, "Sir, I will ask nothing of you right away, but I will make my request at the place and time where I have most need."

Tristano said he would always be willing to serve her; then they took leave of each other and rode their separate ways.

The sight of that maiden reminded Tristano of the beautiful Isotta the Blonde. He rode on ahead, while Dinadano and Alcardo came behind him. So deep were his thoughts that his horse carried him however and wherever it pleased, for because of his sorrows and his memories he neither heard nor saw where he was going. Lost in dreams, he nearly went to sleep, nodding over his saddlebow. Riding this way, they came to a great bridge, one that was guarded night and day so that none could pass who did not first joust. As Tristano crossed it, the knight who was the guardian of the bridge cried out to him, "Soldier, do not cross! I challenge you!"

But Tristano, who was daydreaming, did not hear him or understand him, but continued to ride on. Seeing this, the knight struck out at him and gave him such a strong blow with his lance that he sent man and horse to earth. Then Tristano woke up to find himself on the ground. He was very upset, and he cursed the soul of the giant who had killed his good horse. He turned to the knight and asked him to joust another time, but the knight said he

had no desire to. Tristano asked him again and again, because the fall he had taken was not his own fault. "You have not acted honorably," Tristano said, "To strike me when I was sleeping. That fall did not happen through any mistake of mine."

But the guardian of the bridge said he was under orders not to joust more than once with any knight, and he would not be false to his vow or fail to follow the command.

Then Tristano said, "Knight, I ask you for courtesy's sake to tell me your name and for whom you guard this bridge."

The knight replied, "Sir, you may know that I am called Suziano of the Valiant Heart. I was the son of the beautiful Largina, the most unchaste woman in the world. By being so she gained two rich cities, Tarsena and Latinale, the one held by King Scalabrino and the other by Amorotto of Lestenois. One of these two was my father—it was thought to be King Scalabrino. But I knew nothing of this; rather I grew up in King Artù's court and was made a knight errant. One day as I set out to seek adventure, I passed by this bridge and fought the Scottish knight who guarded it, a man called Sir Lanfate, and I killed him.

"The beautiful lady of this country, then, who is called Losanna of the Torre Antica, came to me saying, 'Knight, you have killed the one who was to be my husband. But if, for love of me, you will guard the bridge until a year from today, and joust with any knight who passes by, then I will grant you my love as wife or as mistress.' And so I, for love of her, have been here more than seven months."

Then Tristano said, "Knight, is the lady Losanna as lovely as I have heard she is?"

Suziano replied that she was the most beautiful lady in the world—"and if you please, come to the piazza and the great tower as my guest, and I will treat you kindly. You ought to come, because the hour grows late."

Because he wanted so much to see this lady, Tristano accepted the invitation, and the four of them rode on toward the Torre Antica. The lady Losanna, seeing the knights, received them with great honor. Soon the tables were set out and made ready for eating, while Tristano marvelled to himself about the beauty of the lady. They ate, then were led into a noble chamber, where three beautiful, rich beds had been prepared for them. They rested here until morning.

When they arose and readied themselves to travel, one table was called for so they could eat again before they rode away. While they were eating, that is Tristano, the lady, Suziano, Dinadano, and Alcardo, four young knights who were Losanna's brothers served them. At that moment, the damsel Tessina appeared in the hall, the one Tristano had made his promise to the day before.

In her hand she carried a naked sword, and she was attended by three

squires. When she stood before the knights she said to Tristano, "Sir, if you please, give me the gift you promised yesterday. But before I tell you what I desire, I want you to know how I have come here.

"Let me reveal that I was the daughter of Federon the Red, who is the brother of Falconardo the Ready, lord of the city of Nuscaligi, and I have been a maiden much praised for beauty. Then it happened that a knight of this country fell in love with me, a knight named Pinabello who had nine brothers. I told my mother how he loved me.

"My mother had him summoned before her and said to him, 'Pinabello, others have given me to understand that you love my daughter. Is this true?'

"And he said, 'I love her more than I do myself or any other.'

"Then she said, 'If you want me to further your suit, you must bring me the head of your own brother Orices, who murdered my brother Garionne. Then I will give you my daughter to be your wife.'

"Then Pinabello, who loved me so much, did not hesitate. He arranged it so that he killed his brother Orices, and presented the head to my mother. Then, according to their agreement, he took me for his wife. The surviving brothers plotted to kill Pinabello, but he guarded himself against them.

"After living in fear for a long time, he happened one day to be riding through the valley of Zetro with four of his knights. Here he encountered his eight brothers. And as the brothers had planned, without other exchange, they began to fight. That was a perilous battle, for in it died Pinabello my husband, two of his companions, and of his brothers, four were killed, so that of ten brothers, six were now dead. Because of this, my husband's family hated me very, very much and desired my death, and I kept myself safe from them as long as I could. But then one day bad fortune brought me to the crossroads at the Fountain of Valesca, where I met a knight of that family. When he saw who I was he drew his sword and told me my end was at hand.

"Pitifully I begged him, saying to him, 'Alas, knight, for courtesy's sake, don't kill me! That can bring you no honor!'

"And he said to me, 'Just because I do not kill you, don't think you have escaped your death.'

"At that, he gave me this sword and made me swear to come here to the lady Losanna and these four knights her brothers, children of Trincardo the Mad, and sister and brothers to Pinabello and the others who died. I was sent here to them to be killed, and I am sure that I cannot escape. Therefore I ask that you grant me the boon you promised yesterday."

Tristano said, "Lady, ask boldly. I am ready to serve you." And she said, "Take this sword and cut off my head, for I would rather die by the hand of a noble knight than come into the hands of my enemies."

Tristano, when he heard what boon she asked for, was miserable and sad, and did not know what to do. Then the lady said, "Knight, of two things you must do one or the other: you must kill me or defend me."

When the lady Losanna and her four brothers realized that this was Tessina, because of whom six of their brothers had died, they rushed forward to strike her down, but Tristano would not suffer it. He pulled out his sword and set himself to defend her, so that there was a great scuffle and hard sword-play all through the hall. Tristano had Alcardo protect the lady, ordering him to get in front of her and take her out.

But Dinadano made no move to help Tristano. Rather, by his words and his looks he supported the lady of the fortress, saying to Tristano, "How can you champion this evil woman, who is the cause of so much harm? It is obvious that she deserves to die."

Tristano cared nothing for these words, but kept on defending Tessina. The struggle was great and dangerous. Two of the lady Losanna's brothers were killed and Suziano was badly wounded, but in the end Tristano left, leading Tessina with him, and went on his way.

But Dinadano, for four reasons, stayed behind. One reason was that he was still angry with Tristano for playing tricks on him; a second was that it seemed wrong to him to defend and give help in escaping to one who had been the cause of so much harm and death; a third, he was afraid of Suziano since he had seen him beat Tristano at the bridge; and finally, it is thought that Dinadano fell in love with the lady Losanna, because she seemed to him an honorable woman.

As he stayed, he fell more and more in love, and it was the first and last time that love ever moved him so. Thus the proverb does not lie that says no iron is so cold that, brought near the fire, it does not grow warm. Dinadano, who was cold and set against love, when he was brought near the lady who was lovely and chaste and warm, became himself a servant of love.

For know that there is nothing so pleasing to the loyal true lover, and nothing which so moves others to love, as the honor of the beloved, speaking both temporally and spiritually, because the loveliness of honor is greater than even that of humility. Thus Dinadano stayed with the lady Losanna, full of love, saying, "Lady, if you desire it I will take oath with Suziano, and if you will promise me your love, I will surely bring you the head of that damsel who has wronged you."

The lady agreed and promised gladly, and the two knights got on their horses and soon caught up with Tristano and Tessina. Then Dinadano shouted, "Tristano, do one of two things: either give me the head of that bad woman, or else defend her!"

Tristano laughed heartily at those words, and turned the iron point of his lance backwards, because he did not want to do Dinadano any harm. They rode hard against each other, but Tristano hit him with the stock end of the lance, and knocked him on to the ground, where he lay and complained greatly of the blow.

Then Tristano turned the iron point forward and struck Suziano with such force that he sent him dead to the earth. After that, he left them both and went on his way. Dinadano stayed behind, sorrowful and sad, swearing never again to love lady or maiden, and never to defend another one of them, whether she be wrong or right.

LXXVIII.

Tristano and the lady he protected rode on day after day until they came to the great valley of Girano. There they met a squire who was riding in great haste, all covered with sweat. Alcardo asked him what the news might be, and he said he was a messenger from Queen Ginevara, who had sent him to ask, command, and invite all knights errant to gather for the midsummer feast of Santo Giovanni in the open meadow outside the castle of Rocca Dura, for the queen had ordained a lavish tournament, and knights from many countries would be there. When he had told them this, the squire rode on, and Tristano and his companion went on their way.

In the middle of the day they came to a lovely plain all covered with fruit trees. In the center of the plain was a fine, rich castle with its gates wide open. At once they rode inside, going straight through the village until they came to the palace. They were received honorably, and the people all cried, "Welcome, knights and lady!" But then under their breath they said, "You have had a fine entrance, but you will never praise your exit!"

Tristano and his companions rested well that evening, for they were nobly served and greatly honored. When they had eaten, they were put in a large, luxurious room where three rich beds had been prepared. Here they slept until morning. When day came they got up and found that the door to their room was shut and tightly locked. Tristano went out on the balcony and saw that the palace was encircled by a wide river and a broad lake of water. In the middle of this lake was a small island with a beautiful palace set on its crest. As Tristano was standing there a knight and a vavasor passed underneath. The vavasor said to Tristano, "Sir knight, you are in our prison, and you will never get out except by dying, according to the custom and the law of this castle. There is no remedy that can set you free, unless you have enough prowess to climb down to the bottom of the tower and get out through a small wicket you will find there. Then you will have to cross an iron bridge to the island and fight with one of our knights who will meet

you there. If he wins, he will cut off your head, and if you beat him, you will cut off his. Not otherwise can you escape for all the gold in the world."

Then Tristano, seeing himself in such trouble, thought a little, then went to arm himself. He climbed to the foot of the tower then, calling on God, got down on all fours to cross the iron bridge, which was one foot wide, 332 feet long, and somewhat thick. Tristano was comforted, and used his strength in such a way that he reached the island.

Then he saw a knight coming out of the palace on foot, completely armed except for a lance. When the two knights confronted each other, without delay they lifted their swords and began a cruel battle, giving each other heavy blows. They fought with a will because they knew that one of the two of them had to be left dead, that is, he could be left in no other way. The two knights fought until each one's shield was destroyed and the greater part of their armor was scattered on the ground and their helmets clanged on their heads. In the second assault they laid bare their flesh, all livid and covered with blood and sweat. The knights were growing tired and out of breath, because each one of them had lost a lot of blood.

But finally, the knight of the island could no longer endure. He stepped back and said, "Alas, God, sir soldier, you know that one of us must die here. Therefore, if it pleases you, I would like to know your name, and gladly I will tell you mine. This is permitted, that we reveal our names to each other, so that the victorious knight may know who he has killed, and of whom he can boast himself conquerer.

"So I want you to know that I am called Amorotto of Gaules, who by my own ill luck have come to this island. I killed the son of Sir Gurone the Courteous, Sir Vasparino, whom I found here then. Now you have come and you will kill me, I am certain of that."

Tristano, when he heard that this was Amorotto, kinsman of Sir Lancilotto, was very sorry, because he saw that the man was seriously wounded. Then Tristano told him his name. Amorotto, hearing that this was Tristano, lord of Liones, the greatest and bravest knight who ever mounted a fine saddle, was the saddest knight in the world. He said, "Alas, my God, it is my greatest misfortune that you have come here! Now truly I must give myself up for dead, for the virtue and power of your name has sapped all my strength and force, and I will lose everything."

Then Tristano said, "Sir Amorotto, can the battle we have begun between us by any means be left off so my companions and I may leave the island?"

Know that Tristano spoke those words not out of fear, but for love; he was so sorry for Amorotto, a handsome knight only seven years older than he was.

Amorotto answered him, "Be sure that the battle we have begun cannot in any way be stopped. It is certain that I am dead and cannot escape. But I pity you, for you will not then be set free. You will not be able to leave

this island for a year from today, and you will have to do battle with all the knights who arrive. Know that all of this has been ordained by a lady of marvellous beauty. Because of her beauty, knights have come from far away to look at her, and she ordained this evil custom so that anyone who desired to gaze on her would have to pay dearly for it. Since then, she has not been plagued with such a great crowd of fops and intriguers.

"The knight who lives on this island can take of her all his delight and pleasure, but he cannot leave before the year's term is served. At the end of the year, if no other knight has appeared, one of the knights of the castle is put here, that is, one whose turn has come."[22]

Then Tristano asked Amorotto, "Tell me, if the knight wants to leave here without permission, why can't he cross the iron bridge and be on his way?"

Amorotto replied, "Tristano, you are mistaken, for this bridge is made by such enchantment and such power that when you are there you can cross it to come here, but once here, you cannot even find the bridge if the lady does not lead you by the hand. And if you come to the bridge, you still cannot see it, it is made by such strong enchantment."

"By my faith, Amorotto," said Tristano, "I will not stay on this island because of any enchantment. I will find the bridge and show it to others, for I am wearing a ring which warns me and shows me all enchantments."

Amorotto said, "Tristano, if you can get me off this island where I have been seven months against my will, we will stop this fight, and I will be your knight and your servant for the rest of my life."

Tristano answered him, "Amorotto, be assured that at any time you please I can show you the bridge quite clearly."

"I am very glad of it," said Amorotto, "But we can't cross it now because of all the people who are watching us. If they notice that we make truce or peace, or that we do not fight to the death, they will send a ship with more than 800 fighting men, all armed with Syrian bows, crossbows, and lances, who will come and kill us on this island.

"And so we must begin again, and I am sure that you will soon kill me, for I am already near death, and have lost all my strength and power. I cannot defend myself any longer. I am sure you will cut off my head and be left lord of the island. But of one thing I am content, for love of chivalry: that you, surviving, can leave here at your will, and can make known to my brothers and all my kin how I passed from this life, so that they will no longer expect me back. They do not know now if I am alive or dead, for no one knows I am here but you."

Tristano, hearing Amorotto's pitiful words, and seeing him so dangerously wounded, began to weep for pity. He thought hard, and then he said, "Amorotto, let us begin our fight again, and attack each other as hard as we can. Then I will let myself fall on the ground, and you cut off my helmet

and make it look like you are cutting off my head, then go back to your palace. When the moon rises, come back to me and I will show you the bridge so we can be on our way."

Amorotto replied, "This makes me very glad, except I do not want you to lie on the ground. It is not a fitting thing that the son of the most high king in the world be left in such a way on the earth."

But Tristano said, "Amorotto, don't make anything of that, because if I seem to kill you, the lady of the island who has had your love for so long will come with other people to honor you, and will find out that you are not truly dead. That would not be good, but they will care nothing for me." Amorotto said, "Certainly, this is true."

The two knights came thus to an agreement, and recommenced the battle, giving each other great blows, but with the flats of their swords. After they had fought for a while Tristano let himself fall down, as if he could do no more, and Amorotto pretended to cut off his head and hurled his helmet away.

When those in the palace saw that their knight had won the victory, they began to make the greatest celebration in the world, and they went to the damsel Tessina and led her before their lady. At that point, two knights and two ladies who were officially appointed came there to look at her, because the custom was that whatever maiden or lady came to the palace must be thus inspected. And if she were as beautiful as their lady, she might ask of them any boon she pleased, but if she were not, they would cut off her head. Their lady had decreed this, because she did not want anyone to come bearing offers of marriage, for she did not want to commit herself forever, but wanted to change her lover every year for her delight. Thus the damsel Tessina was found not beautiful enough, and they cut her head off her shoulders.

LXXIX.

If anyone asks me the name of this castle or the name of the lady who held it, I will speak the truth. The name of the castle was Crudele, and the island was called Perfida; the lady who held them both was known as Medeas, the most lecherous woman in the world, and the most hot-blooded. She also had four sisters, none of whom would take a husband because each of them could be more lecherous without one. These sisters were named Lavina, Agnena, Bresenda, and Pulizena. The fifth was this Medeas, and all five were daughters of the sister of Amore, a descendant of the pagan queen Calistra, queen of the realm of Femminoro, the seat of all lechery.

Know now that when evening came, Amorotto bound up his wounds and returned to Sir Tristano. Together they went to the shore, and on the bank of the wide river Tristano took out the ring which the beautiful Isotta had given him. He gazed into the jewel, then showed it to Amorotto, who then saw the iron bridge openly and clearly, and they crossed over it. When they reached the palace, Amorotto told Tristano how Tessina's head had been cut off, and Tristano was very sad about it.

They left the castle and went on their way, except that Amorotto could scarcely walk, he had lost so much blood because of his wounds. But they rode a day and a night until they came to the house of a vavasor named Triadan, one of Amorotto's very good friends. Triadan received the knights with great honor.

Here they rested for a few days, and Tristano treated Amorotto for his wounds as best he could, and Amorotto treated him. When they were ready to leave, the vavasor gave the knights three large palfreys, and with that they took their leave and rode on. As they rode together across a very beautiful meadow they met a knight named Brunoro the Black, also known as the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat, brother of Sir Dinadano and Sir Daniello, the one whom Lancilotto had killed. As they approached each other, they called out challenges to joust, as the custom was.

Sir Amorotto was the first to ride against Brunoro, and Sir Brunoro sent him to earth with ease, but Sir Tristano nobly evened the score. After Brunoro was beaten, he approached Tristano and asked his name, so Tristano told him. And the knight, that is Brunoro, when he heard that this was Tristano, went down on his knees before him, doing him the greatest honor in the world. Then Tristano told him what his brother Dinadano had done at the tower of the mountain of Cietre.

Brunoro said, "Sir Tristano, know that Sir Dinadano is crazy, but even so he loves you more than any knight in the world."

Tristano said, "By my faith, he is very changeable about it."

The three knights rode together by the shore and found at the edge of the ocean a stone of red marble, into which was thrust a naked sword and a lance. There were words carved in the stone that said this: "With this lance the son will strike the father, and with this sword the father will deal the son a mortal blow, and in those days the joy of the Tavola Ritonda will diminish. This sword cannot be moved from its place except by the hand of the most gracious knight in the world."

Sir Brunoro and Amorotto pressed Tristano to try himself in this adventure, for surely it was meant for him, but Tristano refused to have anything to do with it. So they rode on together until they came to a place where the road divided and went in three directions. Then Tristano said to them,

"My lords, it seems better to me that each of us take his own way, because if we should encounter anyone he might be afraid to joust with us, for it would be too much for one knight to take on three."

And so the knights agreed, and said they would meet at Queen Ginevara's tournament. Then each one chose one of the roads. Taking leave of the others, Sir Brunoro took the road toward Camellotto, Amorotto chose the one that ran along the shore, while Tristano rode directly across the great wasteland of Cartaginale.

Know that in less than seven months in this same wilderness Sir Amorotto and Sir Adriano his brother were killed by three brothers who were the sons of King Lotto.[23]

lxxx.

In this part the story tells how Sir Tristano and the young Alcardo rode through the wilderness two days without finding an adventure, but on the third day at the hour of vespers they found themselves before a fine, strong castle enclosed in white marble walls set with many lovely crystal windows. It was all crenelated in coral, and the doors were made of metal; it was called Palaus, and its lady was Fata Morgana, sister of King Artù and the Dama del Lago. When Tristano approached the main gate, he received permission to come inside. He rode through the town, then through the main doors of the castle; when he came to the palace, he was received with great honor.

When the time came, the tables were set, and after supper the knights were led into a lovely room all painted and decorated, where there were two rich beds. Here Tristano rested until morning. When day came, he got up and armed himself, but when he went to the door he found it fastened shut.

Then Tristano called to Fata Morgana, and she appeared at a barred window, saying to him, "Knight, if you hope ever to get out of here, I want to know your name. In no other way can you get free."

Tristano, because he was very late for the tournament at Rocca Dura, told her who he was, and the lady said, "Tristano, one of the strongest wishes I ever had was to see you." Then she unfastened the door and, taking him by the hand, led him into the great hall of the palace, where they sat down to talk.

Tristano told her how he was late for the tournament at Rocca Dura, and the lady said, "Tristano, this tournament was decreed by Queen Ginevara only so that Sir Lancilotto would come back to court, but in truth, she will be disappointed this time, for he is not even in the country."

Then Tristano said, "For courtesy's sake, will you tell me who you are, you who keep such a beautiful castle?"

She replied, "Truly, I am Fata Morgana, who loves you very much, and would love you more if I thought I could be loved by you. But this cannot be. Just as the four foods are given for the maintenance of nature, you have given yourself completely to the noble service and lovely pleasure of Isotta the Blonde."

And Tristano smiled at that.

As they sat talking, there came a maiden who carried in her hand a basin of gold and a little vessel with rosewater in it, and a silken towel: with these she washed Tristano's hands and face. At that moment there came in a twelve-year-old girl, as lovely and charming and graceful as nature might form, blonder than golden thread, with lovely dark eyes. Her voice was low and sweet, and in her hand she carried a golden cup. Another chaste maiden accompanied her, and together they offered Tristano a drink and gave him rare confections to eat.

Tristano looked very amorously at that maid, and thought to himself that she was very beautiful and charming. Then Fata Morgana, who knew many things and was wise, noticed Tristano's look and said to him, "Sir knight, this is my daughter, and since she pleases you so well, truly I will give her to you as your wife."

But Tristano replied, "By my faith, lady, this cannot be, for I have a wife just as beautiful and charming."

Then the sorceress said, "Tristano, it is true that you had such a one, but you don't have her any more, because for sorrow at your leaving she grew sick and died. But for all that, you can have no lady who can make you happy, for you are bound to the most beautiful woman in the world. There is but one life between you and there will be one death, if the powers I have from Merlino do not lie."

Then Tristano stayed until the hour of tierce, and the sorceress gave him a fine, powerful destrier, the biggest and best that might be found, and then

she had a strong and beautiful shield brought in, all green, on which were painted the figures of a king and a queen. A knight was painted above them, with his feet on the heads of the king and the queen.

She said, "Tristano, since you are going to the assembly, I am giving you this shield, for I want you to take it and carry it for my sake."

Tristano said that he would do it gladly, much admiring the figures painted on it, saying, "Lady, for courtesy's sake, tell me what this means? Why are the feet of this knight so rudely placed?"

But the enchantress replied, "I know nothing about it, except that my father, King Uter Pandragon,used this shield, and it is in memory of him that I send it to the tournament with you."

But know that the sorceress deceived Tristano, for she had had this shield made to dishonor another. The image on the shield meant that Sir Lancilotto had stepped on and dishonored King Artù and Queen Ginevara.

Tristano stayed until he had eaten, then he mounted, took leave, and went on his way, and so rode with the false shield that he soon reached the crest of the great Montagna Petrosa, a league distant from the castle of Palaus. There he met an armed knight, the lover of Fata Morgana and father of Gaia Pulcella: he was called Onesun the Bald. When Onesun saw Tristano with his own lady's shield on his shoulder, he shouted, "Knight, give me that shield or defend it!"

Then the two knights rode against each other, and Onesun gave Tristano a great blow on his shield, so hard that his lance was broken, but Tristano hit him with such force that he knocked him off his horse, and sent the point of his lance a handspan and more through his chest, so that Onesun died there from the blow. Afterwards, Tristano went on his way.

When Fata Morgana found out that Tristano had killed Onesun, her loyal lover, she was the most miserable lady in the world. She had Onesun's body brought to the castle, where she drew the point of the lance out of his chest and closed the wound. She had him buried with great honor in a beautiful tomb, and on the tomb she had letters carved. They said this: "O Tristano, you who have killed Onesun who lies here, know surely that your death will be more sorrowful than his ever was, and you will be killed by the same blade with which you killed him. This will not fail."

LXXXI.

The master storytellers say that Tristano rode on until he came to the bank of a wide river, and here he met a proud and noble knight who carried insignia all white except for one vermilion garland. He was a knight very much in love. When he saw Tristano he greeted him courteously, saying, "Sir, may God save you, have you seen anywhere a knight whose insignia is all white except for two vermilion bands across?"

Tristano answered him, saying, "I have met a lot of knights with many different armors. Tell me the name of the one you search for, and who you are, and I will give you help and counsel in how to seek him out."

The knight replied, "Truly, sir, you would not recognize my name, nor do I mean to tell it to you or anyone until I have first taken vengeance on the knight who is known as Lancilotto del Lago. If you can direct me to him, I would be very grateful for it."

Tristano said, "Sir, tell me what disservice Lancilotto has done you and I promise to guide you or tell you the way to the place you can find him, or else the knight who is dearest to him, the one he loves more than he loves himself. In that way, if you are as excellent as you seem here to be, you can take high vengeance on him."

He replied, "I will be very glad to tell you the way that Lancilotto has done me great wrong, but only if you can lead me to him, or at least to his family or friends who are willing to take the burden of vengeance on his behalf, so that I may vindicate myself and erase my shame. That is why I want you to know how Lancilotto did me harm.

"I am a knight who loves one maiden only. She is called Gaia Pulcella, truly the most beautiful creature nature ever made. She is the daughter of Sir Onesun, born of Fata Morgana. I loved Gaia Pulcella for more than a year and thought only of her: for her sake I left off all other chivalry and all other delight. Then one day as I rode near the Castle of Palaus, I looked into the garden and I saw my love and the heart of my body, the one for whom I was languishing night and day. It was Gaia Pulcella, and she was attended only by three maidens.

"Seeing her there, I was the happiest person in the world. I did not hesitate, but lifted the damsel in my arms and placed her before me on the saddlebow—it was with great joy that I took her away. It is true that the damsel yet felt no love for me, and she wept continually. When we were three leagues from the castle, I found a lovely spring, where I lifted her down and tried hard to comfort her, washing her face and her beautiful hands. I flattered her and offered her all my service, and it seemed a thousand years until evening, when we would come to my fortress, eight leagues farther on.

"All this time I gazed at the damsel, and saw how beautiful and graceful she was. I looked at her lovely, lovely face, and I began to kiss her soft red lips and touch her small white breasts. Then I undressed her body with its fine limbs, so delicate and tender, and when I saw her so desirable, I could not restrain my will.

"Then courteously I lowered her onto the pretty grass, and softly I lifted her robe and her white silken shirt, and gently I mounted over her delicate white body and held her, to request her love. But she, who felt no love yet, began to weep and cry out.

"At that moment this Lancilotto passed by, the one that I am seeking, and when he saw the maiden crying he told me that I was not behaving courteously. I said to him that he should go away and not hinder me in taking this love I had desired so long, but he would not. Instead, he dismounted, took me by the feet, and threw me to the ground. Then he drew his sword and I drew mine, and we began a fierce battle, dealing such heavy blows that we were both wounded in many places. We would have fought like that until one of us was dead if it hadn't happened that Onesun, the damsel's father, came there and led his daughter away as pure as she was before. When I saw this, I was the saddest knight in the world, for I was certain that now he would keep her under such a guard that I would never be able to see her again.

"So after we had fought a long time, because of weariness and the pain of our wounds we left off the battle. At that point we called a truce, swearing that the next time we encountered each other we would fight until one of us lay dead on the ground.

"And so I beg you to tell me where I can find him, for I am determined either to die myself, or to kill him, the one who despoiled me of all my delight."

Then Tristano said, "I promised to guide you or to find Lancilotto for you, or at least find some knight who would fight for him, and I am certain you will find him willing. It seems a great injury that he did you, but I marvel at it greatly, for it is not like him to do such things. Anyway, I do not know where in the land Lancilotto may now be. I assure you, though, I am a knight who loves Lancilotto more than any man who lives, and he loves me as if I were himself. If any injury or dishonor should come to me, it would be as if he received it on his own person. So now I tell you that I am the one who will champion Lancilotto, and any injury he has done to you, or you to him, I will take upon myself, and your shame may be avenged.

"And the death I may suffer, Lancilotto will receive in his own person and have for himself, and if I kill you, Lancilotto will be as satisfied as if he had done it with his own hands."

Hearing these words, the knight was convinced that this was Lancilotto himself who had by chance changed his insignia, and he said then to Tristano,

"Knight, I truly believe you are the one I have been searching for. I summon you to joust—defend yourself if you can!"

Tristano answered, "I swear that if you gain a victory over me, your revenge will be complete."

Then the two knights separated more than a bowshot, and came to the encounter, as knights do. Each struck the other's shield so hard that their lances burst into many pieces, but neither was unseated. As they finished their course they unsheathed their swords and began a hard, cruel battle, giving many harsh and heavy blows and allowing each other no respite.

When they had fought a long while, they rested from the first assault, and after they had rested a little, they started to fight again. They gave each other such heavy blows it was impossible to believe. Their strokes were so heavy that their armor was stripped from their backs and their flesh was livid from the blows. Their blood covered the ground.

Each of them marvelled greatly at the strength of the other, and Tristano said to himself, "Alas, Lord God, is this Lancilotto himself, who is trying to test me?"

And the knight said to himself, "Alas my hard fortune, for I am certain I am fighting with Lancilotto, but he seems to have doubled his strength!"

The two knights fought in such a way that the first and second assaults were ended, and at the third the ground was even more stained with their blood. But finally it is true as always that Tristano was superior to the other knight, who could not endure against him, but grew tired, so that all of his blows grew fainter, while Tristano's blows grew always stronger.

Then the knight stepped back, saying to Tristano, "Sir, strike no more. I acknowledge my defeat." At once he dismounted, took off his helmet, and cast down his sword and shield. He fell on his knees before Tristano, asking him to spare his life for courtesy's sake.

Sir Tristano pardoned him, saying he would not take his life as long as he would reveal his name and promise to go as a prisoner wherever he would send him. The knight said he was prepared to do this. He said he was called Sir Burletta of the Desert, and was the nephew of Sir Lucano the Great.

Tristano then said, "Burletta, if you would like to escape out of my hands, cross the bridge and go straight to the city of Camellotto. There wait until Sir Lancilotto appears, then give yourself up to him as prisoner on behalf of Tristano of Cornovaglia."

Burletta, seeing that there was nothing else he could do, said he was ready to go. He mounted and set out on his way. On the crest of the bridge, he had a thought, and stopped; Tristano watched him, thinking that he repented his promise. Burletta thought hard, wondering if it wouldn't be better to die at once than to put himself into the hands of the worst enemy he had in the world. Then his heart swelled with pride and despair, and he swung

himself over the saddlebow and threw himself into the rushing river, where quickly he was drowned.

Seeing this, Tristano marvelled greatly, and recommended Burletta to all the devils who have fallen from the sky. Then he told Alcardo to take the knight's horse and mount it himself, and they left, riding beside the river at great speed, because the hour was late and they saw no habitation.

As they rode along, they heard the whirr of a windmill, and turned toward it. When they got there, they found the place was kept by three churlish and villainous millers. Tristano greeted them courteously, asking them to share their roof and their bread, and give fodder to the horses, but they said they didn't want to, because they had earned that day only enough for themselves, and had none to give to horses.

Tristano said to them, "My lords, we don't want your provisions for nothing. We will give you money for them, as much as you say."

Then they agreed. The knights dismounted, tying their horses outside; then they went in under the roof and passed the night as well as they could. The next morning they got up still armed as they had been the night before, and paying the millers what they asked for, rode on across the great plain.

LXXXII.

Tristano rode one day after another until he found himself on the meadow of Rocca Dura, where Queen Ginevara's tournament was to be held. There they found that so many knights had gathered, anyone who had a place to lodge considered himself rich. Set up around the field were many tents, shelters, and pavilions, and many people were staying here because the castle was full, and could not hold everyone. Tristano went looking for a place he could best lodge. As he was going along, he met a knight called Sir Adriano who asked him, "Sir, where have you come from?"

Tristano said to him, "Sir, I come from the kingdom of Sansogna."

"Now tell me," said Sir Adriano, "Could you give me any news of my brother, Sir Amorotto of Gaules? I have not seen him for a long time, and I do not know if he is alive or dead."

"By my good faith," said Sir Tristano, "I can tell you a good deal about him. He was a prisoner on the Island of Perfida, but not twenty days ago he was set free and soon he will be here, along with the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat."

Then Sir Adriano said to Tristano, "Sir knight, I ask you for courtesy's sake to lodge here with me in my pavilion, where you can be at ease. It is in the most beautiful place on the field."

Tristano accepted the invitation because he had need of it. Know that by now most of the people were assembled. On one side was King Artù, all the kinsmen of King Lotto, those of King Pellinoro, King Allielle, King Agalone, and all the kinsmen of King Bando except Lancilotto, and even all of the knights errant. On the other side was the King of Scozia with all the knights of his family, the King of a Hundred Knights, and the Kings of Sobicio and Gualagne; the King of Ingres, and the King of Sansogna with all their forces. Then Tristano entered himself on the side of King Artù and the knights errant.

Trumpets and cornets were sounded from one side and the other, once, then twice. At the third call, every knight began to fight with his lance. At once King Artù lowered his lance and struck the King of a Hundred Knights; King Artù's lance was the longer, so that he knocked his opponent out of the saddle and onto the ground. Then the King of Scozia overcame the King of Norgales.

And the good knight Sir Tristano rode onto the field, doing such deeds of arms that all the people were astonished by them. He overthrew the King of Sobicio and the King of Gualagne, the King of Scozia and many other knights. Before his lance broke, he had sent sixteen knights and kings to earth. Then he took his sharp sword in hand and began such deeds of arms that it was impossible to believe them. So bold and strong did he strike that no knight dared stand up to him, and for fear of him everyone gave way and made him room. Before evening he had won the field on behalf of King Artù against all the foreign knights, and all the people cried, "The knight of the false shield has won the tournament!"

At that, each knight returned to his own pavilion. When morning came, King Artù made a proclamation on behalf of Queen Ginevara, that each knight should return to the field and fight until midday. Then, with permission, they could go on their way. This time Tristano entered himself on the side of the King of Scozia and the foreign knights. When the trumpets had sounded and the people were seated, the knights began the attack.

In this mêlée Sir Calvano knocked the King of Scozia down, and Sir Prezzivale overthrew the King of a Hundred Knights. Sir Giuriano, the King of Scozia's nephew, beat Amorotto of Gaules in a very fierce battle.

Sir Tristano, when he rode out, beat Sir Briobris, Sir Calvano, and Amorotto. After Amorotto had been knocked down, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat approached him, saying, "Sir Amorotto, did you recognize the knight with the false green shield, the one who beat you?"

Amorotto replied, "I know him well, for I recognized him here yesterday. He may have recognized me, too, since he did not give me a very hard blow.

He may have recalled with fondness our good companionship on the island called Perfida."

When the knights had broken their lances, they took their swords in hand. Then there was such a loud noise of blows being struck and horses neighing that it was impossible to see or hear. Many knights could be seen to knock each other off the backs of their horses, and many a good steed went with empty saddle. The field was strewn with hands, legs, and heads cut off; knights and barons sustained many great wounds; many were killed on one side and the other.

Sir Tristano again showed great prowess, and dealt such great blows that no knight dared stand against him. This time he beat the King of Norgales, King Allielle, Sir Brunoro, and many other knights, and killed with his own hand sixteen knights on both sides. All gave way in fear before him, making room for him and shunning him, and all said as one, "This is surely the bravest and best fighter that anyone has ever seen, the best of the whole assembly."

No one knew his name yet except Amorotto and the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat, who had been with him at the stone of the magic lance and sword.

Know that when Fata Morgana had given the shield to Tristano, she had also commanded one of her maidens to ride to the field at Rocca Dura and make sure she spoke with King Artù himself. She told her to point out the shield that Tristano carried on his arm, and to tell the king what those figures on it stood for and what they meant. Morgana did this to make King Artù hate his wife Queen Ginevara, for she herself hated Ginevara very much simply because Lancilotto loved her, and the enchantress would rather that she herself were his beloved. Also the queen had stirred up discord between Morgana and her brother.

When the damsel received her lady's commands, she mounted her horse and rode so that she soon came to the field where the tournament was held. While Tristano was fighting so bravely, the maiden approached King Artù, saying, "Sire, do you see that knight who is doing such great deeds? Look at him well, because the shield he carries on his arm signifies your great shame, and it was to shame and dishonor you that the shield was made."

Then the king, looking at the shield and recognizing its meaning, was very angry. Gladly would he put the knight to death if he could find a way.

Nonetheless, Tristano rode over the field beating barons and knights, doing so much that none dared stand before the blows he dealt; everyone avoided him and gave him room. Before noon he had won the field again, and overcome King Artù's side. The king, seeing the advantage taken by one he hated so much, was very unhappy. He thought that this must be Sir Lancilotto carrying the shield to shame and dishonor him, since a short time ago Lancilotto had departed, disdained by the court.

But since he was not sure of this, he wanted to find out. He summoned

Sir Ivano to accompany him, and they secretly set out. They rode straight to the wilderness of Ramoano, where they thought the knight of the false shield might come to rest himself. Then after Tristano had won the tournament, and had scattered all the people, he and Alcardo left as secretly as they could and rode into the great wilderness.

When King Artù saw them, he approached them and said to Tristano, "Knight, I ask you for courtesy's sake to tell me your name; this would please me more than anything that could happen."

Tristano, not realizing that this was King Artù, answered, "I am a knight from a distant land who came to this tournament for love of a lady."

"And who gave you this shield?" King Artù inquired.

Tristano replied, "In truth, the shield was given to me by Fata Morgana, sister to King Artù. She asked me to bear it at this tournament for her sake."

Then the king said to Tristano, "Sir knight, do you know what these figures mean?"

Tristano said, "No, by my faith, for she would not tell me. She said it was made for her father Uter Pandragon, and asked therefore that I carry it in this tournament."

Then the king knew that Tristano was not guilty and did not carry the shield to spite anyone, but that the evil had been done by his own sister, who wanted to dishonor him along with Ginevara, his queen. At that the king said to Sir Tristano, "Knight, after all I would still like to know your name, because you seem to be the best knight in the world."

But Tristano said, "By my faith, sir, I will by no means tell you my name."

"Then I challenge you to fight," said the king.

Tristano grew angry, saying, "Alas, villain knight! As you know very well by looking at me, I am tired; yet you summon me to do battle! Still, by my faith, I will not fail you, and I think I can make you regret your challenge."

Then they drew apart more than a bowshot, and coming together struck two great blows, so that their lances shattered. But Tristano hit King Artù with such force that he sent man and horse to earth, and broke one of his ribs. Then he took another lance and came toward Sir Ivano, saying, "Sir knight, are you also full of the desire to know my name and to joust with me?"

Sir Ivano replied, "I want neither to joust with you nor to know your name, but I will take vengeance for my companion if I can."

Then the two knights challenged each other and drew apart, and at their meeting Sir Ivano gave Tristano such a blow that his lance was shattered, but Tristano sent him to the ground badly wounded, then afterwards rode on his way. The king, in great pain, got to his feet and still smiling said to Sir Ivano, "Let us go back to Rocca Dura, for by my faith now well and pleasantly has this knight told us his name."

Sir Ivano answered the king, saying, "Sire, he has certainly satisfied me, for this whole month I will ask no other knight for his name, you may be

sure of that. Let him be from whatever realm he wants and let him be whoever he can be, for a man does not grow old except by minding his own business."

Then with great effort they remounted and rode back to Rocca Dura. When they reached the palace they sent for fine doctors and had themselves treated. In a little while the king summoned Sir Calvano and Sir Chieso the Seneschal and told them how the knight who had won the tournament had beaten and wounded them, and how he was riding now through the middle of the wilderness of Ramoano.

Chieso said, "Sire, don't say such words, because we would pursue him against our will. Even though we are sorry about your hurt, still it is the better injury compared to a worse one; our going would not vindicate your shame and dishonor."

And the king said, "By my faith, I would so gladly know his name I would give a rich city for it."

Sir Calvano said, "By my faith, I marvel greatly that no one knows this knight at all, and that he got away so secretly. But, by my faith, Sir Adriano ought to know who he is, because he was lodged in his pavilion."

Then the king summoned Sir Adriano and asked him, "Sir, do you know the knight with the false green shield who today did such deeds of arms?"

Sir Adriano replied, "I do not know him, but he said this much to me: that he had been the companion of Amorotto and the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat."

Then the king had those two brought before him and commanded them to tell who the knight was who had won the tournament.

They said, "Did you not recognize him?" And the king said no.

Then Amorotto said, "Know surely, my lord, that the knight who carried the honors of the assembly was the valorous Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia, who always goes through the world winning the honor and prize of all chivalry. He does this for love of the beautiful, noble queen Isotta, she whom he loves so much. And know that just the other day he freed me from prison in the island of Perfida, out of the hands of Medeas."

The king, hearing that this had been Sir Tristano, was the happiest king in the world. Tristano was so praised for bounty, beauty, and prowess over all other knights in the world, that King Artù felt compensated for the injury he had suffered jousting with him in the wilderness. Then he had it proclaimed throughout the assembly that the knight who had won the tournament had been the noble Sir Tristano, son of King Meliadus of Liones. At that, all the knights were consoled, for they held it no dishonor to be beaten at the hands of the noblest knight in the world.

When the next day came, each king, count, and baron returned to his own country. King Artù, with the knights errant and Queen Ginevara, returned to Camellotto. Here they found that Lancilotto had returned to the court, all unhappy because he had been beaten that day by a bold knight.

He had even left his shield hanging on the wall of the tower that belonged to the knight who had beaten him with his lance alone, and because of this, Lancilotto felt himself greatly disgraced. But he was comforted when he looked at the clear and lovely face of Queen Ginevara, and secretly he took with her pleasure and delight.

Know also that when Tristano left the assembly he rode one day after the next until he came back to the castle of Palaus, that is, to the town outside. He gave back the shield to Fata Morgana and, picking up his own, set out to seek adventure without delay.

LXXXIII.

The masters of the story tell that Sir Tristano continued to ride through the great wasteland of Spinogres, riding until he encountered a knight all armed except for his shield. Tristano did not challenge him to joust, for two reasons: first, because he saw that the knight was not fully equipped, and second, because Tristano never challenged anyone unless he believed him to be a knight of great name and great prowess.

So when they met, each greeted the other courteously; and Tristano asked the stranger why he rode without his shield, something knights errant did not usually do. The knight, who was Sir Arpinello, lord of the castle of Bauttiganero, said to Tristano, "Know, sir, that this is not without good cause, for the other day when I was passing a great tower, by my misfortune I sounded a horn which happened to be hanging there. At this summons, a knight came out to joust with me, and he was the biggest, bravest fighter in the world. He beat me, than commanded me to write my name on my shield and hang it on the wall of the tower with the others that were already there. If I refused, I would have to stay three months in prison.

"So I, hearing that I had such a choice, wrote my name on my shield and hung it up as a sign that he had beaten me, attaching it to a ring on the tower with the others. I am not terribly ashamed of all this, since there were as many as 140 shields hanging there. This knight is a man of great prowess: his name is Sir Carados the Thirteenth.

When Tristano heard what this knight said and heard him mention Sir Carados, whom he knew to be a knight of the Tavola Vecchia who scorned the knights of the Tavola Nuova, he was very anxious to meet him in combat. So he then said to Sir Arpinello, "Well, knight, for courtesy's sake and

the love of chivalry, I ask you to guide me and accompany me to Sir Carados' tower. I ask you to do this because I promise one of two things will happen: either I will be killed, or I will recover your shield for you."

Then Arpinello said to Tristano, "Sir knight, I am ready to do as you wish, but first, truly, I would like to know your name."

Tristano, because he so much wanted this knight to show him the way, told him his name; then Arpinello, when he heard that this was Sir Tristano, a man of such high fame throughout the world, thought a little and said, "Tristano, I am ready to go with you wherever you please. But I strongly advise you not to go there. Do not go seeking trouble, shame, and dishonor, for I assure you that on the wall of that tower hang more than 140 shields which used to belong to some of the boldest knights in the world; Sir Carados has beaten giants in jousts with the lance and battles with the sword. Therefore, don't go looking for trouble, for the greatest evil in the world is that which a man creates for himself."

Then Tristano said, "Sir Arpinello, your advice gives me pleasure, but I will be even more grateful for your help. So I beg you to guide me to this tower."

The knight agreed, and they began to ride together through the great wilderness. They rode this way until the hour grew late, when they came upon a stronghold belonging to a courteous and worthy knight. He was a contentious man much hated by his enemies, and he was called Sir Adanain. When he saw the two knights he did them great honor, gladly receiving them at his dwelling. He had them disarm, then had the tables brought. As they were eating, the host, seeing how handsome, strong, and well-made Tristano was, was very pleased with this youth, and asked him his name.

But Tristano replied, "Noble host, I am a knight from a distant land. Don't be troubled if that is all I can say, for I have taken a vow."

The knight was very angry and unhappy about that, because he gladly would have found out Tristano's name, so delighted was he by the young knight's size and gracefulness. He thought truly that he had seen him before, but he could not remember where, and because of this he became even more inflamed.

Nevertheless, he honored him greatly and entertained him courteously and well. When they had eaten they were led into a fine rich chamber, where there were three rich and noble beds. But all that night Sir Adanain thought of nothing else except how he might find out who Sir Tristano was. He decided to accompany him to the tower, since there he would find out his name when he had to write it on his shield and hang it up on the tower wall.

In the morning Tristano and Arpinello armed themselves well, and Adanain did the same, and Tristano made his farewells, thanking his host very much for the honor he had done them.

And his host said, "I am pleased to do you honor, if only you would tell

me your name. But by my faith, I believe I will know it before nones, because you will have come to a place where you will have to tell it, whether you want to or not; whether it pleases you or not you will not be able to get out of it or keep your vow."

And Tristano laughed at that, saying, "If I'm made to tell my name by force, I won't be forced to tell the truth."

LXXXIV.

In this part the story tells how all three of the knights were riding down the great slope of a mountain. As they crossed a little in front of the mountain and rode onto level ground, they saw five armed knights approaching them along the broad highway. When Sir Adanain, Tristano's host, saw their insignia, he knew at once who they were. Then his whole face was altered by fear, and it seemed as though he wanted to turn back. Tristano, seeing the fear in the countenance of his host, asked what so disturbed him, and Adanain said, "Sir knight, I am sure I see the Count Balie coming, my most mortal enemy in all the world since I killed one of his brothers. So I will just ride back at a great pace to my castle, for I no longer care about your name or your kin."

Hearing these words made Tristano very happy. He immediately leaned over and took Adanain's horse by the bridle, saying, "Noble host, by my faith you shall not leave me. Not, at least, until you have found out my name."

"Eh, what?" said Adanain, "Will you hold me here to my death? I tell you, I see this count accompanied by four knights. As soon as he catches sight of me, he will put me to death!"

"I don't think that will happen," said Tristano, "But even if it might, you shall never leave me until first you find out my name."

At that Adanain counted himself as dead. He wanted to unsheath his sword and strike Tristano, but when he saw this, Tristano pretended to be very angry, saying, "Knight, if you hold your life dear don't unsheath that sword. If you do, I will cut off your fist."

Then Adanain said to Tristano, "Alas, sir, you are a very villainous knight, to do me so much evil. I had you, as my guest, honorably served and nobly treated; now you force me to await death at the hands of my enemies. I beg you for the sake of the greatest courtesy that you allow me to turn back, for I am tired of finding out your name."

Tristano did not reply to him, but continued leading him by the bridle. Soon they met the count and his company, and as soon as the count saw Adanain, his mortal enemy, he prepared to strike and put him to death. Adanain was desperately frightened.

Tristano said, "Noble host, how is it with you? Do you still want to know my name?"

But Adanain, because of his great fear, answered nothing. Then Tristano rode forward and spoke to the count, saying, "Sir, what do you mean to do? Don't you see that Sir Adanain is under my protection?"

Then the count came forward, saying, "Who is the knight who would defend a traitor?"

Tristano replied, "Sir, I am the knight who will defend Adanain."

At that, the count challenged Tristano and Tristano returned the challenge. They rode together, lances set, and delivered two great blows. The count broke his lance against Tristano, but Tristano kept his whole; he sent the count to earth by the length of it, badly wounded.

Then Tristano took his unbroken lance and with it beat the second knight and the third, wounding them both; the fourth he sent dead to the ground then knocked down the fifth man, horse and all. When Tristano had delivered all these blows, he called to Adanain, saying, "What do you want me to do with your enemy the count?"

Adanain replied, "If it is possible, I want him to pardon me his ill-will, for I would gladly be rid of so much hatred. He has six sons, all of whom want me dead."

Tristano, upon hearing these words, drew his sword and said, "Sir, truly of two things you must choose one. Either offer peace to Adanain or get back on your horse and fight me with the sword. But if I win, I will certainly cut off your head."

The count, seeing how things were, said to Tristano, "Knight, an evil deed is better than death, so I will do your will and make peace with Adanain. I swear never to offend him in any way."

Afterwards the count and his men left and went on their way. Then Tristano turned to Adanain, saying, "Noble host, I pray that God be with you. Return to your house, since you are secure from your enemy and satisfied about my name."

But Adanain said to Tristano, "Sir, I can never repay you enough for the great service you have done me, for you have delivered me from death and freed me from a terrible feud. I assure you that I will always be your obedient servant, but even so, I will never leave you until I have found out your name. For you must know that I am more curious now than I was before, because of the great prowess you have shown, and the great nobility that reigns in you."

Tristano smiled at these words and said, "Noble host, I am sure if you

ride in front and meet any more of your enemies, you will not find such help as you did with this one, or such defense."

Adanain replied, "Sir, since I am now safe from the count and his brothers, I fear no other knight. Therefore I will not leave you until we come to a certain nearby place where you will reveal your name whether you want to or not, believe me."

Sir Tristano said, "Noble host, you have certainly turned your cloak, for just now you wanted to get away by any means you could, and now, against my will, you want to follow me. But you will see what happens."

LXXXV.

In this part the story tells that the three knights rode down the broad highway, continuing on so that by the hour of nones they found themselves before Sir Carados' tower, that is, Torre Vittoriosa. They looked at the fort, and the fine, strong tower, and saw that in front of the gate there was a column of vermilion marble, to which six ivory horns were attached by a silver chain. There were letters carved into the column which said:

"You, O knight, passing here on adventures to win honor and the great prize of chivalry, sound these horns if you feel bold and proud and you will joust with the lance and fight with the sword against the best knight in the world. If you win, you will vindicate the shame of all the brave knights who were beaten here and who have left their shields on the tower where you see them hanging. But if you lose, you must stay three months in my prison, or else hang up your shield with the others and swear that for three months you will carry no shield at all."

Sir Tristano read those words, then looked under a pine tree standing in the meadow. He saw there twelve good horses saddled and ready for battle, and four poles of armor decorated and furnished for a knight's use. Then Tristano admired this baron over all others in the world.

Then he stepped forward and gave a great blast on one of the horns. At the sound Sir Tristano made, Adanain approached him saying, "I am sure, knight, that the time has come for me to find out your name, believe me. For truly I believe you will be writing it on your shield and hanging it with your own hands on this tower with the others. Then your name will be known to me and to anyone else who pleases to look."

Tristano made no answer to this but had Alcardo prepare him and his

own good horse in all the necessary ways. Then when Tristano had waited a little time, out of the tower rode an armed knight the size of a giant, all prepared to do battle with him. When he came before Tristano he greeted him courteously, saying, "Knight, if your horse or armor has any flaw, make use of the other beneath that pine, for they are the best in the world. Take whatever pleases you."

Tristano answered him, "Many thanks, noble sir, but I have no need of horse or arms: mine are good enough."

Sir Carados said, "Then I know of nothing else to do except to fight."

Tristano said that he was ready, that he had come there for no other reason. At that each knight challenged the other as well he knew how, each with lance in hand. Truly they resembled a pair of ferocious lions. Their horses were strong and swift, and the two knights were eager, brave, and vigorous. In their first encounter they traded two such great blows that they burst chest-, girth-, and cinch-straps, unhorsing them both, saddle and all, in such a way that they were stunned by the fall.

But soon each one got to his feet and unsheathed his sword, beginning a fierce, cruel battle on foot, giving many great blows. So they fought in the first assault until most of their armor was useless. Truly, each one of them was covered with wounds, they had both lost a lot of blood, and neither had gained the advantage.

At that point, the day was waning, and they had fought so hard they could scarcely see each other. So by agreement they stopped the fight, and Sir Carados went back into his fortress to rest and have himself treated. Tristano and his companions rested in another palace outside the wall, a house where the foreigners lived. Here they were treated as honored guests, and all their needs graciously met. Arpinello and Adanain ministered to Tristano's wounds.

When the next day dawned, at six-thirty in the morning, Sir Tristano and Sir Carados rode back out to the field on their good destriers. Meeting, they challenged each other, then eagerly rode to strike each other on the shield, hitting blows so heavy that both lances were shattered. But neither knight bent the other over the saddlebow, and they finished their course.

As they wheeled their horses around, each man took his iron mace in hand and began to deliver such great, strong blows that it was a mighty marvel to watch. Soon most of their armor lay in pieces on the ground.

In the third assault each one was so badly wounded that his flesh was stained and livid with blood and sweat, but still they both seemed always to find greater strength, because so much depended on this battle. Sir Tristano greatly exerted himself to surpass the experience that the other knight had acquired in the passing of time, for Sir Carados had been doing deeds of arms for over forty years. And the older knight was afraid of losing, fearful of losing his reputation, because he claimed to be the best knight in the world.

Then it seemed to all the people in the fortress, and to Sir Arpinello and Sir Adanain, that Tristano was getting the best of the battle. Carados was very tired and his efforts were diminishing, while Tristano seemed always fresher. During the battle the knights had had to dismount because their horses were so exhausted they could not stand up.

In the fourth assault, most of the ground was stained with their blood, and Sir Carados said to himself, "Alas, lord God, who can this knight be who is so bold and such a mighty warrior? He doesn't seem to be Sir Sigurans the Brown, nor yet the high prince Galeotto, nor Lancilotto, nor Palamidesso, for I have tested them at other times, and made them hang up their shields against their will."

And on the other side, Tristano marvelled greatly, saying, "Alas, lord God, this is surely a bold knight! He has truly in himself great and powerful strength, without using magic arts: he is one of the greatest knights I have ever met or found in this world. Neither Brunoro the Brown, the high prince Galeotto, nor even Lancilotto comes near him."

And the perilous battle went on. In the fifth assault Sir Carados put forth all his strength and struck Tristano on the shield so that it broke down the middle, and Tristano's left arm was seriously wounded. Then Tristano was infuriated, and struck Carados on the helmet with the edge of his sword, hitting with all his strength. That blow was so heavy that it sliced through helmet and iron cap, making a great gash in his head, so that Carados fell senseless to the ground, and lay a long time without getting up, pulseless and unmoving, because he was unconscious.

When he came to himself, Tristano said to him, "Knight, knight, sir, let us not fight any more."

Carados replied, "Surely, noble sir, I did not believe there could be a man who could fight as long and as hard as I, nor finish a battle with me. Always I have come out the winner and held the honors: that is evident in the many shields you can see hanging from the high tower wall. Among them are those of the best knights in the world.

"Now all this honor and all this praise is for you, because you are the knight who has beaten and conquered me. You have vindicated the shame of all the others, and have acquired for yourself the honor and praise I have won over such a long time.

"You have treated me so that if I were now as fresh as I were at first I would not make another assault on you for all the gold in the world. From the beginning you were the most graceful knight I have ever seen, and as the battle came to an end you became a crueller, fiercer fighter than all others, striking so hard that you seemed to lack all pity. For courtesy's sake I ask you, and by the honor of your chivalry, tell me your name and who you are, and from this moment on I will leave the fortress and all its land to you, putting my own shield up where the others are hanging and promising

you that I will go into the wilderness to serve God, because all of my honors fade and are false compared to yours."

Then Tristano told Carados his name and Carados replied, "Truly, Tristano, many times I proved myself in feats of arms with your father Meliadus, the fountain of chivalry and courtesy, but he was as nothing compared to you. Through your great prowess and reputation you have taken from me both the fame and the shame of our battle."

Then Carados wrote on his shield with his own hand the words I will tell you, then hung it on the wall of the tower above all the rest. The words he wrote were these:

lxxxvi.

Being in vainglory where no fame lasts,
I, Carados, had in myself so much noble skill,
That neither Uter Pandragon nor the barons of the Tavola Vecchia
Did I fear or have to consider,
And all the knights of the Valle Bruna retreated before me,
And King Artù and all his courtiers,
Sir Lancilotto and those of high standing.
Giants and knights of fortune were afraid of me,
But when I was on the crest of my wheel there came a young knight and noble boy
Who, by his prowess and boldness,
Took from me the prize and honor and conquered me completely.
Truly one can say: This was Sir Tristano, son of King Meliadus of Liones.

Tristano stayed on until a month had passed, until he and Carados were cured of their wounds. Then Carados, unarmed and on foot, went into the wilderness of Andernantes to a monastery, there to stay and serve God and do penance for his sins.

Afterwards, Tristano gave the fortress and all of its holdings to Sir Arpinello, and left orders that the shields not be moved from their place except by the hands of those to whom they had belonged, who had hung them there by Carados' command.

Tristano's host, that is, Sir Adanain, hearing that this was Sir Tristano of Liones, the noble and valiant knight he had so often heard of, got on his horse at once and rode as quickly as he could to King Artù's court to tell of the marvel and the great battle which Tristano had done and which he had seen with his own eyes. As he rode, he told the news about what had happened to every knight he met.

And know that when Tristano counted the shields at his leisure, he found there were exactly 138. Of this 138, 15 came from knights of the Tavola Vecchia, and 126 were from knights errant.[24] Two were from Sir Lancilotto, and twelve were from great giants, and the others were all from bold foreign knights who fought for the honor and prize of chivalry.

Tristano had the horns taken off the column and the letters effaced. Instead he had written there that whatever knight errant should pass that way could shelter there and please himself until the end of six days, and other people three days, at the castle's expense, that is, the expense of the people of the castle. And to any knight errant who needed it, a good palfrey would be given, to other knights, a roncel, and to the man on foot, a pair of good shoes. For it happened that few people ever came that way except knights on great adventures, because the country was in such a deserted place.

Then Tristano and Alcardo left and went looking for adventures in many lands. Here the story stops telling about Sir Tristano, and we will speak of a proud knight of the Tavola Vecchia who went to the court of King Artù to vindicate his great shame, telling how because of his coming King Artù and all the knights errant were in danger of death. This is the truth.

LXXXVII.

The true story tells that there was a lady in a distant country, the Isola di Vallone in the Soriano Sea. She was very learned in all the seven arts, and her name was Escorducarla. One day she found out through a certain messenger that a knight errant in the service of King Artù had killed four of her sons, and that Artù himself had cut off the head of her daughter Elergia before the marvellous Palace of Grande Disio. Because of this, she became the saddest lady in the world, and night and day neither thought of nor busied herself with anything except plans for a high vendetta against King Artù and his knights. She wanted to manage it so that not even a single knight errant would be remembered.

When she had thought about this for a long, long time she sent for her brother, who lived in the Fortress of Ancisa on the Isola Riposta in the Uziano Sea. When this knight, who was called Sir Lasancis, received his sister's summons he went to her, and she received him with great honor, saying, "My brother, well you know the great injustice that King Artù and Tristano of Cornovaglia have done me, killing my five children, your nephews and your niece. Now you ought never be consoled, nor think of anything else except of taking high vengeance on them. As quickly as you can I want you to go to the kingdom of Longres and take great revenge."

Then Sir Lasancis said, "Lady, lady, what is this vanity you speak? I may once have been a bold knight of great strength, but you see that now I am getting old. Thus I am not able to make a high vendetta, for even if I manage to kill one knight or two, the others would soon kill me, because the strength, boldness, and courage of the knights errant are too much for me. So, dear sister, if I go it will only be to make two evils out of one, and to accrue worse damage and dishonor."

But the lady answered him, "My brother, don't think I would send you to a distant land because I wanted you to die, for I love you more than I love myself. I know you are a knight who could defend yourself against one knight or two, but I will give you enchanted armor made in such a way that it can by no means fail you, and I will give you a lance of such power that if you joust with it for the space of a year it will never bend or break. I will have the lance set with iron so strong and made with such art that no matter how lightly you touch a knight with it, he will fall to earth at once, and in this way you will always be the winner.

"Now I want you to follow my directions. Go to the city of Camellotto, and when you reach the gates take shelter in the great palace kept there by the foreigners: you will see it at the crest of the meadow. Make sure that you get the key to the great hall in your possession. Then ride out and demand a joust, as is the custom of these bold knights. You will have no occasion to become distressed or tired, for all you have to do is touch the knight with the iron of the lance, and he will be unhorsed at once, it is certain.

"When you have beaten this knight, have him tell you his name, then make him a prisoner in the great hall of the foreigner's palace; lock it well and keep the key safely with you. Stay here jousting thirty days, so that you lure all the knights errant to Camellotto, especially Tristano, who killed your nephews. And when you have imprisoned King Artù and all the defeated knights, then set a fire so that no one can escape, and burn down the palace with everyone inside.

"Afterwards, when you see you have the advantage, ride into the city and kill as many people as you can find in Camellotto. When you have done this, you and I will have accomplished the greatest vendetta in the world. But of one thing be very careful: you must not fight with a woman, for if

you do, the power of the lance will be lost."[25]

At that, Sir Lasancis said, "Noble and beloved lady, I am ready to do your will."

Then they prepared him with everything he might need, and his sister gave him the enchanted armor and magic lance, along with a strong destrier and insignia which displayed the head of a lady on a vermilion field.

Thus prepared, Sir Lasancis rode away, travelling one day after another, passing fields and mountains, woods and knolls and forests, until he found himself on the great plain of Longres. Then he rode on to the city of Camellotto and found out that King Artù and many other knights and barons had just returned from the great tournament at Rocca Dura, and that Sir Lancilotto also was in the city.

At that point, Sir Lasancis of Isola Riposta dismounted at the great palace of the foreigners, taking shelter in the lower hall and closing the hall above on both sides. He rested there that night, then in the morning arose and rode to the center of the meadow. Putting a fine large ivory horn to his lips, he blew a loud blast, with that sound demanding a joust.

At once, Sir Ivano rode out to the encounter. When Lasancis saw him, he quickly prepared himself to joust, and they rode against each other. But Lasancis, by the special virtue of his lance, sent Sir Ivano to earth the moment he touched him. Then he took him by the noseguard of his helmet and demanded his name, and imprisoned him in the great hall of the palace. Afterwards he kept the key safely with him.

Following that, he defeated Sir Chieso, Sir Calvano, and Prezzivale, Astore di Mare, Amorotto, and Briobris; before his lance might twist or bend he had sent fifteen knights to earth, and locked them all in the great hall of the foreigners' palace. When he saw that night was coming, he returned to the palace and rested there, and had four of his squires stand guard.

King Artù and Sir Lancilotto greatly marvelled at the prowess of this knight, believing that he might be Sir Sigurans the Brown, who was praised for strength and skill above all other knights. When the next day came, Sir Lancilotto rode out onto the field demanding a joust. As he met the knight, he saluted him very courteously, and Lancilotto said, "Who are you, knight, you who have shown so much prowess against the knights errant? Are you Sir Carados or Sir Sigurans the Brown?"

And the knight replied, "My name and my origin you may not yet know, but I will say this much: I am a knight from a distant land who, that I may serve a lady, has sworn to dwell in this palace a month and to joust with as many knights as will meet with me here. If I am the winner at the end of that time I will ask of them whatever boon I please. I am called the Knight Aspetta Ventura, because I so greatly desire to do the will of the lady by whose commandment I come here."

Lancilotto said, "Sir, it will be too much for you to joust with as many

knights as will challenge you now, for know that the honor you acquired yesterday must be abandoned today."

Then without further exchange they rode apart, but at the lowering of the lances Sir Lasancis touched Sir Lancilotto first with his enchanted weapon, sending him quickly to earth. Commanding him to say his name, he imprisoned him in the great palace with the rest. He returned to the field where he soon overcame King Artù, Sir Bordo, Sir Brunoro the White, Sir Lancha, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat; Lionello, Sagramore, Dodinello, and some twenty others, the flowers of the Tavola Ritonda.

Queen Ginevara, when she saw that King Artù, Lancilotto, and some sixty knights errant were imprisoned, was the saddest lady in the world. She was afraid that they might never be set free if they were not delivered by the prowess of Sir Tristano. She gave the city into the keeping of Sir Agravale and a number of other knights, then mounted at once with four maidens to attend her and set out toward Cornovaglia and the city of Tintoile, to look for Tristano.

As she rode thus, she told every knight she met what had happened, and sent him in great haste on toward the city of Camellotto. Among these were Sir Palamidesso, Sagris, Gariette, Dondonello, and many other knights errant. She rode on in haste, always weeping, and as a sign of her great distress she carried a round ball in her hand, and a hollow reed. These things, according to the custom of the time, were carried by ladies or knights who have lost the thing they love most.

When she had ridden ten days and had reached the borders of Guascogna, she encountered Tristano there near the castle of Barfonalle. When she saw him she recognized him at once by the insignia he had carried at the tournament at Rocca Dura. It was his custom to change insignia from time to time, and he did this because knights who recognized him would not willingly joust with him, or try to prove themselves against him at arms.

Seeing it was Tristano, the queen greeted him courteously, saying, "Knight, for love and courtesy to the one you love most, are you Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia?"

And Tristano replied, "Lady, you have no need to entreat me so, because I never conceal my name from a lady or a maiden. Know that I am called Tristano. But who are you, who ride so like a lady disconsolate?"

Then she approached Tristano and embraced him and kissed him more than a hundred times, saying, "Well found, falcon of the knights errant! Now know that I am the unhappy Queen Ginevara. I have come looking for you, and the news that I bring you is the most evil and cruel in the world. One foreign knight—I do not know from what place or country he comes—has arrived at the city of Camellotto and has overthrown my lord the king, and Sir Lancilotto, and more than sixty of the knights errant. He has done this with a single lance, and has imprisoned them in the great hall of the for-

eigners' palace, and I don't know if I will return to find them alive or dead."

Tristano, when he heard that this was Queen Ginevara, and when he heard what news she brought, at once lept off his horse and knelt to her, then began a great lament before her, saying, "Alas, Lord God, now how is the Tavola Ritonda so disgraced by the virtues and prowess of a single knight?"

Then he remounted without other delay, and they began to ride swiftly back toward the city of Camellotto. They rode all that day through the great wasteland of Capetrenalle, coming that evening to a lovely hermitage held there by a holy hermit. He received them with great honor for the love and grace of the Holy Spirit, and also because of the virtue of the ring Tristano wore; he knew the course they took, and why they were going there.

The hermit said to Tristano, "Sir knight, your great prowess is necessary, because you are going where the need is great. I tell you truly that I am certain, if you do not vindicate their honor before seven days from now, King Artù and all the knights of the Tavola Ritonda will die an evil death.

"But your strength will not avail against the virtue of wit, because the knight you must combat wears armor all enchanted in such a way that no weapon can damage it at all, and his lance is wrought with such mastery that he has only to touch a knight or his horse with it to send him to earth at once. See, therefore, that you by no means joust with lances."

Tristano thought much about this matter, and in the morning he and his companion remounted and rode hard, night and day, until they arrived at the city of Camellotto. Here they found it was true that all the knights errant had been defeated and taken prisoner. Above the great tower of the city was placed a reed and a ball, a sign of heavy mourning. The empty, useless reed showed that their good firmness was lost, and the round ball, with no fixed point, signified that happiness could in no way be depended on.

Sir Tristano, upon finding out this news, was very sorrowful and worried. But then, cleverly, he went throughout the city hiding lances and spears and anything that looked like a lance. Afterwards he armed himself with care to great advantage, wearing his best armor and grasping in his hand a heavy iron mace with three big iron balls hanging from it on strong chains: each one of those balls by itself weighed 100 pounds. Then at once he rode out to the meadow all armed; here he found Lasancis and greeted him courteously saying, "Sir, I am a young knight, as you can see, and I am not very used to jousting, by my faith. And what is more, I tell you that in all this city I cannot see, or touch, or find a single lance. Thus I ask you, on the honor of your chivalry, that we may have together an encounter or two with sword or mace."

It happened that the knight, who was very proud, believed that he had already accomplished everything he had come for. The month would be

up in three days, then he would burn King Artù and all the knights errant, and afterwards go back to his own country.

He spoke to Sir Tristano, saying, "You seem to be such a young knight that I care nothing for your mace or your sword, so you may fight with me using anything you please."

Then Sir Lasancis propped his lance against a tree, and the two knights gripped their swords and began a dangerous battle. The knight, who had great prowess of his own, struck Tristano's shield so hard that wherever he struck, that part was knocked to the ground, and Tristano struck him on the helmet but did not damage it at all, for his sword just bounced off. Nonetheless, the struggle between the two knights was a great one. Tristano was wounded in every part, and his armor was sliced to shreds; and all of the blows he gave Lasancis were useless and did no damage to his armor, it was so thoroughly enchanted.

But neither could Lasancis overcome Tristano. He marvelled greatly that the young knight had the breath and strength to endure against him. Queen Ginevara and the ladies and aged knights who were watching held Tristano for dead, and indeed both knights were exhausted. Gladly they rested after the first assault.

In a little while, they began the second, and continued to fight until daylight was gone. Tristano was very glad to see it go.

Then Lasancis said to Tristano, "Knight, knight, I advise you not to let yourself be killed. It would be better to yield yourself prisoner like the others, for as you can see you haven't enough strength to hurt me at all."

Tristano answered and said, "Knight, I pray you that in the morning you will meet me for one more assault. If I cannot harm you then, I will yield myself your prisoner."

Then the knight agreed, and turned back toward the great palace. Through either overconfidence or ignorance he left his lance behind, so Tristano took it and buried it in the ground a good distance away. When the knight reached the palace, then he remembered his lance. He rode right back for it, but found that Tristano was still there. He looked for his lance, but could not find it. That made him sad, but still he did not care a great deal because he did not think he would have need of it. He went on back to rest.

Tristano rested in the city that night, for he had great need of it, and he had his wounds and bruises treated. In the morning he armed himself with new armor, since his own was bent and broken, and he had his squire carry two great lances, each made just like the other. When he came to the field, he found that Lasancis had already arrived, and he said, "Sir, would you like to prove yourself with a lance? Here are two just alike: take whichever pleases you and we will joust together."

Then the knight took a lance, though not as willingly as he would have taken his own. They rode apart from each other at once, and at the en-

counter traded two such great blows that the lances shattered. When they finished their course, the knight unsheathed his sword and Tristano grasped his heavy mace. He would have brandished it in the air the day before, had he not been afraid that Lasancis would then resort to his enchanted lance.

The knights began a cruel battle, such that after the first assault Tristano's armor was again in shreds. But Tristano took his heavy mace and hit the knight on the head many times, so that he bent him over the neck of his horse. Lasancis begged Tristano not to fight with the mace, but Tristano would not agree to this. Rather they began a second assault in which Tristano was wounded all over his body, so that the ground was stained with his blood, for the other knight was an excellent fighter. But Tristano, with that heavy mace, delivered such great blows that even though he could not damage the armor, still he bruised bone and flesh very heavily and with great force made blood spurt out of his opponent's mouth and nose, even out of his eyes and ears.

He could hardly see for the huge blows Tristano gave him on his head, so the knight asked Tristano for a respite. Tristano, realizing why he wanted it, would not agree. He did no villainy in this, since he did it out of fear and concern for all the good people in prison. He knew that this knight could not be beaten by force of arms in a fair fight, and for that reason he was cruel beyond his nature.

The two knights fought on in this way, but Sir Lasancis could not last against that heavy beating. Soon he let himself fall to the ground, claiming mercy from Tristano and admitting defeat. Tristano dismounted and, leaping at once to his side, drew his sword and unlaced Lasancis' helmet, saying, "Tell truly who you are!"

Then Sir Lasancis told Tristano everything that had happened: why he had come there, who he was, and all that he had plotted to do. Then Tristano made him hand over the key to the palace so he could set free the king and all the prisoners—there were 137 in all.

When the king and all the knights were on the field in front of the two combatants, Tristano commanded Lasancis to tell them from the beginning who he was and why he had come and everything that had happened, and to tell the truth to all.

Then the knight, who had no choice, said again to all the people how he was called Lasancis of the Fortress of Ancisa on the Isola Riposta, and how he had come on behalf of his sister, the lady of the Isola di Vallone, to be revenged for the shame of the maiden Elergia and his four nephews whom King Artù and Tristano had killed at the enchanted Palace of Grande Disio. And he told how it had been planned that he, for vengeance, would have set fire to the palace and would have burned the king with all the barons and knights. He told how his armor was enchanted, and how he had defeated them all by virtue of his magic lance.

The king and Lancilotto and all the other knights, when they heard what a villainous death Lasancis had planned for them, wanted to kill him, but Tristano would not suffer it, for he was more courteous than any other knight. Instead, he got angry, saying, "My lord King Artù and you other barons and knights, what a great boast you make now against this warrior. You should have killed him when you fought with him, not now that he is my prisoner." Then the king and the others were quiet.

Tristano quickly turned to Lasancis, saying, "An evil and terrible thought you had, to want to kill so many good people in such a way. It would have been too great a wrong to make them suffer for another's fault. But now I declare that I am that Tristano who killed the four knights at the enchanted palace, in the service of King Artù. But I will do this, if it please you: let you rest as many days as you need to, then afterwards we will joust with the lance and fight with the sword, and there will be no enchanted armor or lance, and I will not use my heavy mace. If you defeat me, then boldly take your vengeance on me and go on your way, safe and fortunate, but if I am the winner I will take whatever vengeance these good people want upon you."

Lasancis replied, "Tristano, according to what I have heard before, and what you have at present proved, there is not a knight in the world who can endure against you in direct battle, and if I had known who you were from the first I would not have laid aside my lance so courteously for all the gold in the world. This much I tell you for sure: for the rest of my life I will never strike another blow against you, and I hereby give the power of life or death into your noble hands. Give me whichever pleases you, for the proverb is ugly that says, 'Where the ass falls, he will not want to return.'

"Thus whoever proves himself the first time in battle, one does not fight a second time against him. Therefore I give you all my armor. Take it, and there will be no knight in the world so invincible as you will be, of this you can be sure."

Then Tristano took the armor and retrieved the lance and had them melted in a hot oven, saying, "Best is the knight who is pleased to have and to wield prowess of his own, to be bold in deeds and have courage in his heart, to have strength in his limbs and wisdom and cleverness in battle, and who does not mock his own skill with enchanted armor."

Then he had Sir Lasancis taken to the great palace of the foreigners and had him locked up, with only one barred window for access. He had him provided, well and willingly, with whatever he needed, and attended by four squires who stayed with him the rest of his life.

And in the meadow King Artù had a white marble column erected, and carved with letters that told the prowess of Sir Tristano, and all the things he had done in his struggle with Sir Lasancis. He had another great lodge

built for the foreigners, and it had neither doors nor walls, but was all made of great marble columns, and was very, very beautiful.

LXXXVIII.

In this part the tale tells that when Tristano had rested for thirty days in great solace, love for the beautiful Isotta the Blonde began to prick his heart so sharply he could hardly bear it. It was for that reason that he took leave of King Artù, Queen Ginevara, Sir Lancilotto, and all the knights of the Tavola Ritonda. All the knights and ladies kept him good company for pleasure's sake for more than three leagues outside the city; then afterwards, when they parted, the people all knelt down and prayed that God would give him a long and happy life, because it was he who had defended the Tavola Ritonda and restored all the knights.

When Tristano had said good-bye he went on, riding with Alcardo until they came to the country of Cornovaglia and the castle at Cornasin. Here Tristano was received with great honor because the people loved him more than they loved King Marco. Then, through Alcardo, Tristano made known his return to Isotta, the sister of his heart. The king, receiving Alcardo, honored him greatly, and soon Alcardo found the opportunity to tell Isotta that Tristano was back.

Hearing this news made her rejoice and flower like a tree in the springtime. At once she arranged it that Tristano could come to her disguised as a priest to confess her. And when the two loyal lovers were together again, as they had desired to be for such a long time, each one embraced the other. With their arms around each other they went to lie on a rich and noble bed, and here they began to take great joy of each other, not sleeping all that night until morning.

When day came, the ladies of the castle called for Isotta as was their custom, and waited outside her door until half-tierce. The king, when he saw that Isotta did not get up, was very surprised. He went to her chamber and opened the door, and saw Isotta and Tristano sleeping. He at once turned away and summoned forty knights to arm themselves and take Isotta and Sir Tristano. He imprisoned one in one tower, the other in another, and swore that he would never let them out.

And know that when the news had spread throughout the land that Tristano was in prison, King Artù and all the knights errant thought of

nothing else but how to set him free. Tristano was imprisoned thus for seven months. Now the tale stops telling about Sir Tristano, and we will speak of a worthy knight errant who arrived in Cornovaglia and, through his prowess, set Tristano free.

LXXXIX.

The story tells here, my lords, how a knight errant of the fellowship of King Artù who was riding in search of adventure through the kingdom of Cornovaglia came to the castle of Dinasso the seneschal. Dinasso received him with great honor, gladly welcoming him. In the morning, as he was getting ready to go on his way, he looked toward the city of Tintoile and, seeing how beautiful it was, asked who maintained it. Dinasso told him that it was under the lordship of King Marco of Cornovaglia.

Then the knight, who was Prezzivale lo Galese, remembered Tristano. At once he asked Dinasso if Tristano were in prison there, as it had been told. Then Sir Dinasso, who was a perfect friend to Sir Tristano, began to weep mightily, saying that indeed it was true that here was imprisoned the flower of courtesy and virtue of all the knights in the world. Prezzivale stood thinking a little, and afterwards asked Dinasso, "Could I in some way call this King Marco outside and joust with him?"

Dinasso answered yes, because every Thursday morning the king went to amuse himself along the shore, holding fine jousts. Then Prezzivale decided to stay there, and swore he would never leave that kingdom until he saw Tristano out of prison and free.

He stayed at the castle for four days, until the morning that King Marco, attended by ten knights, rode outside the walls to amuse himself. At this, Prezzivale waited no longer, but armed himself at once and also had Dinasso and three of his nephews armed and provided with disguised insignia, and rode out to the king.

When he drew near, Prezzivale presented himself and demanded a joust. Then one of the knights, who was called Sir Falcone, accepted the challenge. When they rode against each other Prezzivale struck him very courteously and sent him to the ground. Dinasso had told him that this was not the king, so he asked for a second joust; he defeated Sir Adriette and two other knights, then remounted and challenged the king. Marco, seeing that he jousted so courteously, armed himself at once and rode against him. Dinasso

handed Prezzivale a great, strong lance with a very sharp point, saying, "Be comforted, knight, for this is the king, through whom Tristano can be delivered."

Then the two men rode against each other, and the king hit Prezzivale, though not hard enough to break his lance. Prezzivale hit the king with such force that he broke two ribs in his chest and sent him off his horse badly wounded. Then he unsheathed his sword, saying, "King Marco, of two choices make one: either release Tristano from prison at once, or resign yourself to death. I would have you know that I am Prezzivale lo Galese, and the others you see with me are four of the best knights King Artù has in his train. My lord King Artù has sent us here for no other purpose than to set Tristano free."

King Marco, hearing this and seeing how things were, called Adriette and gave him the key, commanding him to let Tristano out of prison. He did so, but not very willingly.

Tristano then arrayed himself in robes of delicate colors, mounted a palfrey and came before Prezzivale, greeting him courteously and thanking him with great warmth.

Then Prezzivale said to Tristano, "I ask you a boon."

And Tristano said, "Ask anything you please."

Prezzivale responded, "Give me your glove."

Tristano gave it to him, and Prezzivale said, "Here are King Marco and Adriette. Now I ask that you make them try out the prison where they kept you."

Then they went back to the city where Tristano imprisoned the king and Adriette, and set Isotta free. Prezzivale stayed with them twelve days, then took his leave. Then Queen Isotta begged Tristano to take her out of Cornovaglia and bring her to Gioiosa Guardia, as he had promised before. Tristano, seeing that this was truly the queen's will, and that she so much wanted to see Gioiosa Guardia, had himself equipped with gold and silver, good horses and armor, and many fine clothes of silken cloth. He told Dinasso to let the king and Adriette out of prison after ten days.

Tristano and Isotta, with Brandina and Alcardo, went by the main road and arrived at the kingdom of Sobicio. Here Tristano had a monk's robe made and wore it over his armor, in order to proceed more secretly.

After they rode thus for a few days over the plain they came to the kingdom of Longres and crossed the great plain of Lutrinoro. There, one morning, they encountered a fully armed knight. When the knight saw the lady, who happened to be riding in front, he greeted her courteously and bowed to her. The lady returned his greeting gently and well, as she ought to do. Then the knight began to gaze and stare at the lady, saying to himself that he had never seen such a rare and lovely creature.

When Tristano rode up in his monk's disguise, the knight said, "Bold man,

by my faith, you are not wise to have a lady so graceful and beautiful under your guard, for I do not know of any knight so honorable that he would not take her away from you. And I tell you this much: if you go through the great forest of Polones, she will surely be seized. That is nothing to marvel at, for she is so beautiful, graceful, and charming, truly if she came of a high lineage she would be more beautiful than any other woman, except Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara."

Then Tristano answered him, "Knight, go on your way. Whoever takes her from me will have to be stronger than I am."

And the knight said, "By my faith, I do not know of any knight who would not be stronger than you are at deeds of arms, for even if you are strong and well made, you would have neither the skill nor the spirit for fighting."

"By my faith," said Tristano, "just because we must obey the rules of our order, you knights hold us in too much contempt. This habit does not rob me of my strength or my heart's courage."

Know that the knight was much troubled by those words, and this was because the lady pleased him so much and so delighted him that he would gladly pick a fight with the monk in order to take her away from him. Then he said, "I believe, O servant of God, that this must be the wife of one of your friends, and I am a knight errant who, out of reverence for your habit, will accompany you through all this savage land. And I want you to know that I will treat the lady as if she were the wife of King Artù himself."

Sir Tristano, recognizing that the offer was made because the knight desired Isotta and did not want to leave them, said to him, "Knight, go on your way; I do not need your escort. I would rather go on alone than be badly attended, and if any knight does or says anything to me, I will know how to answer him. For no other reason do I have this shield, helmet, and lance carried by these two squires."

Then the knight, seeing that the monk did not want his company, spoke to him and said, "By my faith, the helmet and shield will do you little good. You are doing a villainous and shameful thing, for it is not suitable that anyone in religious orders escort a lady, especially one like this. Tell me at once who this lady is, and who you have stolen her from, for surely I ought to know. And where do you think you are going?"

"By my faith," said Tristano, "You neither ought to know nor shall you know who she is, or where she came from, or where she is going, you may be sure of that. Do the best you can or expect the worst, for you want to be a guardian when you have not been asked, and give trouble in things that don't concern you, and help that is not needed."

Then the knight said, "Surely, monk, you answer roughly, for by my faith, such words would be too much from Sir Tristano of Liones, who is the best knight in the world. But you anger me such a little I will pay no attention to you, neither to your cape nor to your habit, rather I will throttle you,

you are so insolent. Now leave the lady at once; go on your way and do something else."

Tristano answered him and said, "In good faith I swear to you I will not leave her with you, not for your threats or all your pride. This would be too much, by my faith, from Lancilotto del Lago, who is the flower of all knights errant. Don't think that against such an insult I hold my profession worth a penny."

Then he summoned his two squires and laced his helmet on his head, took his shield on his arm and gripped his lance, saying, "Sir knight, if you want to pick a quarrel with me, I can do no less than this, for my rule and God command it. That is, Cristo permits it, and says, 'Help yourself, and I will then help you.' "

The knight laughed loudly at these words. He knew he had done wrong to put the monk into such a temper, but the beautiful lady pleased him so very much that he could do nothing else. He said, "Servant of God, my conscience warns me against such villainy, but my will compels me to take this beautiful lady. If you will give her to me without a fight, I will be very grateful, but if you won't, I will take her by force."

Tristano answered him, smiling: "As for the sin, freely I pardon you and stand ready to give you penance. Now to the proof of it, for I challenge you."

The knights rode apart, then turned to strike two such great blows that their lances shattered, but neither bent the other over his saddlebow. When they had run the course, they each unsheathed a sword and began a cruel, heavy battle with mighty blows. They fought so hard that their armor was becoming all bent and broken.

In the second assault their flesh grew livid with blood and bruises and their horses could no longer stand. Each one marvelled greatly at the strength of the other, and the knight said to himself, "Alas, evil monk of ill fortune! What a waste to give yourself to God! How can you have so much strength?"

And Tristano said to himself, "Alas, lord God, what misfortune has sent me today to encounter this knight?"

As they fought on in this way, dealing great blows, it happened that the knight's sword fell out of his hand. At once, Tristano called to Alcardo, saying, "Take this sword and give it to the knight."

Alcardo dismounted at once and took the sword by its point, lifting it up for the knight to take. As the knight reached for the sword he recognized Alcardo, knowing him for the squire who had been at Camellotto with Tristano when he had fought Sir Lasancis. Then he said, "Valet, valet, alas for courtesy's sake, tell me the truth. Were you at Camellotto with Sir Tristano when he fought Sir Lasancis? Tell me, for courtesy's sake."

"Yes, I was there," said Alcardo.

Then the knight began to weep and sigh mightily, saying, "And is it true, valet, that Sir Tristano is in prison as they say, kept there by King Marco?"

And Alcardo said, "Who are you, sir, that you ask so strongly?"

The knight answered and said, "Truly, I am a knight who loves Tristano very, very much, and I am now on my way to Cornovaglia either to set him free, if God be with me, or to die in the attempt. I am called Lancilotto del Lago."

When Sir Tristano heard that this was Lancilotto del Lago he came forward at once and embraced him tightly saying, "Knight, many thanks, but you need go no farther, for here I am, sir, your Tristano, freed by the great prowess of good Sir Prezzivale."

At that, the knights let fall their swords, unlaced their helmets, and together showed the greatest joy in the world, and so did the beautiful Isotta. Then Tristano took off his cape, and they went to a nearby castle called Garbrano. Here Isotta cured the knights' wounds, for both of them were hurt. Afterwards, they got back on their horses and went on their way.

When they neared the city of Camellotto, Tristano asked Lancilotto not to reveal his travels, for he wanted to go and stay at Gioiosa Guardia. Lancilotto then rode on ahead so that Tristano would not be recognized because of him. He found King Artù waiting outside the city with all the court, very sad, because the certain news had come that Sir Amorotto and Sir Adriano had both been killed in that week.

XC.

The true story tells that when Lancilotto had left Tristano and his company they came on behind him and rode thus until they came to King Artù's pavilion. Then Tristano lifted an ivory horn to his mouth and began to sound it, and by that sound he demanded a joust.

Then against him rode Sir Calvano, the son of King Lotto of Organia, and they began to fight vigorously. Sir Calvano struck Tristano such a blow that his lance shattered all to pieces, and Tristano hit him with such force and vigor that he sent him to earth, but kept his own lance in one piece. That was considered by all the knights watching to be one of the most magnificent blows on earth, because it was given between the hours of sext and nones, when Sir Calvano had three times his normal strength. This special power had been given him by the holy hermit who baptized him, and it lasted for one hour between sext and nones.

After that, Sir Tristano defeated Mordarette, the son of King Artù by

his sister, the wife of King Lotto, and then he beat Sir Agravano and sent Sir Troiano dead to the earth. Before his lance broke he had beaten ten knights on the field.

In a little, then, Sir Lancilotto rode out to Sir Tristano, and the king and queen and all the others watched closely, thinking he was going to vindicate the shame of those ten knights. But when Lancilotto reached Tristano's side they put Isotta between them, and taking her by the hand went on their way.

They rode until they came to Gioiosa Guardia, where they were received with great honor. Here Tristano and Lancilotto knighted Alcardo and gave him the name Sir Lantris; from now on our book will call him Sir Lantris.

After Lancilotto had stayed there for six days, he took leave and returned to the city of Camellotto. King Artù asked him where he had been, and who the knight and lady were that he had gone away with. Lancilotto was not willing to tell him anything then; he only said that he would tell him later. But then he told Queen Ginevara, and one night she revealed it to King Artù.

Know that one of the strongest wishes King Artù had was to see Queen Isotta, to find out if it were true that she was as beautiful as he had heard she was. In order to see her, he thought up and devised the greatest event, one which cost many barons and knights dear, because they were killed and destroyed in it. The king decided to sponsor a great tournament outside the castle at Verzeppe, because that castle was set above a very beautiful plain and surrounded by a wide river called Lago Soriano. Also, it was only twenty leagues from Gioiosa Guardia, and forty-four from Camellotto.

XCI.

In this part the story tells how one morning King Artù got up, summoned Lancilotto, and said to him, "Knight, it seems to me that we are growing lazy, for it has been more than sixteen months since we have had a tournament. That seems to me a great wrong and an insult to chivalry."

To this Lancilotto responded, "Certainly, sire, you speak the truth. It would please me very much for you to have a tournament announced wherever you would like to."

"This I will do," said the king. "And I will arrange for it to be the biggest, the finest, and the one with the most people ever made in Grande Brettagna."

Then King Artù had the bells rung with hammers, and the trumpets and drums sounded, and had letters and messages sent to every country to announce and make known that three months from then, at the feast of Pentecost, all kings, dukes, counts, marquises, barons, princes, vavasors, and heads of families, and all knights errant and foreign knights of great reputation were to gather before the beautiful castle at Verzeppe to hold a tournament.

And every king or true son of a king was to bring the lady, be she maiden or mistress, he loved the most, with the understanding that if she were taken along the road by any single knight, he would never see her again, and the one who took her might keep her then without reproach. And whatever king or son of a king might refuse to bring his lady would be thought cowardly and vile, afraid that he could not defend himself. He would forfeit horse and harness, and would lose the respect of all the knights errant and foreign knights. To that intent the sentence was set by King Artù, and the sentence could never be removed, or lengthened by anyone else.

The sides were announced in the proclamation: that is, on one side was King Artù and all the kinsmen of the knights errant, and on the other, King Amoroldo, the King of Scozia, the King of a Hundred Knights, the King of Liones, the King of Gualagne, the Kings of Sobicio and of Ingres, and all the other kings and barons and foreign knights who should come to that assembly.

Thus did King Artù order the tournament that was to be held before the castle at Verzeppe, only that he might see Queen Isotta the Blonde. Because of this, many proud knights would be killed, because it was to be the biggest assembly ever called since King Artù had assumed the crown. And as the proclamations and messengers and envoys went out, each king and baron made ready to come as well-equipped and as honorably as he could.

Now the tale leaves this, and we turn again to Sir Tristano.

XCII.

The true story tells that the brave and courteous Sir Tristano expected to remain at Gioiosa Guardia as long as he pleased. Here he rested, and was happier and more joyful than he had ever been in his life. He found adventures in the country around, because more knights came through there than through any other place. Tristano was then twenty-eight years old.

No one knew he was at Gioiosa Guardia except these three: King Artù, Queen Ginevara, and Lancilotto. The people of the castle, even though Tristano was their lord, did not know his real name, but called him Nobile Cavaliere, and called Isotta, Dama Avvenante.

One day when Sir Tristano was riding through the countryside alone he came to the Fountain of Cuparia, where he dismounted to rest. After a little, here came the Beast Gratisanti to drink. She was very tired because the courteous Sir Palamidesso had been pursuing her; but as soon as she had drunk she ran back into the forest.

At that, there came a knight who was called Breus sanza Pietà. When Breus saw Tristano he shouted out thus: "Who are you, knight?" And Tristano replied that he was a knight from a foreign country.

Know that Breus had this custom: whenever he met a knight he shouted out like this and showed himself at once. If the knight responded timidly or with a shaking voice, Breus said, "This is for me," and at once attacked him vigorously. But if the knight answered fearlessly then Breus said, "Not for me," and rode away at once.

Now he went to let his horse drink. At that moment the courteous Palamidesso rode up, and as he reached the fountain, he called out loudly, "Knights, have either of you seen the Beast Gratisanti pass by here?"

Then Tristano, who saw immediately by his insignia that this was his enemy Palamidesso, answered to make him angry and said, "Certainly, knight, we saw her very plainly. Even so, we don't want to tell you which way she went, for we are just as anxious to go on this hunt as you are."

Palimidesso replied, "By my faith, sir, it is not courteous of you to want to join my hunt, for I would rather fight her myself than accept such companionship."

At that Breus spoke up and said to Palamidesso, "Sir Knight who wants no companions in your hunt, it is in just such a situation that the one who wants all loses all. Be careful that nothing happens to you like happened to King Marco of Cornovaglia, who did not want anyone to share the beautiful Isotta with him. Now the word is everywhere that the bold and courteous Sir Tristano has taken her and led her away. At least so it is said

around here, but nobody knows where she is for sure, and King Marco is still in prison himself."

Then Palamidesso was greatly dismayed and said, "And how, sir, was Tristano delivered out of King Marco's prison?"

Said Breus, "Truly, it was through the prowess of Sir Prezzivale lo Galese."

"By my faith," said Palamidesso, "I am very happy about it, for it is a reasonable and just thing that the most beautiful woman in the world be with the boldest knight in the world. She was badly matched with King Marco. Now I will leave the entire hunt to you, because I do not expect to stop looking until I find out where the courteous Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta might be."

While they stood there speaking thus, a squire rode up, in great haste and covered with sweat. When he reached the great fountain, Tristano asked him the news, saying, "Valet, where do you come from?"

"My lord," said the boy, "I am a vassal of King Artù, from whom I bring the news to you and all knights errant and all foreign knights that in the beautiful month of May there will be a tournament before the castle at Verzeppe, and that every king or true son of a king must bring his lady or his mistress, the one he loves the most." And he told them the conditions as they were written above. "This is the news I bring, and I ask that you make it known to others just as I told it to you, and tell them not to keep it a secret from anyone." And at that, the squire rode on his way.

Then Palamidesso said to the two other knights, "My lords, at a good hour did I come to this place, for here I found news that delights me greatly about King Artù's tournament and about Sir Tristano's being delivered out of King Marco's hands!"

As they were talking thus there came a worthy knight who was called Sir Briobris. When Palamidesso saw him he rode toward him at once and demanded a joust. Each one struck the other with his lance, and Briobris knocked Palamidesso down, horse and all. When Breus saw him make such a noble strike he spurred his horse and began to go on his way in a great hurry, so that Briobris went after him, intending to make an end of him. Thus Breus fled and Briobris pursued him until they encountered three knights who were Breus's mortal enemies: one was Prezzivale, another was Astore di Mare, and the third was Sir Arecco. When Breus recognized the three knights, he thought he was dead. In order to slip out of their hands he devised this subtlety: he began to cry out to them loudly, saying, "Sir knights, for the sake of courtesy and the honor of chivalry, help me and don't let me be killed by this most scurrilous knight in the world, who says he is called Breus sanza Pietà!"

Then Sir Astore came forward saying, "Knight, have no fear, for by my faith there is not one of the three of us you won't find willing to put him to death, for Breus is our mortal enemy."

At that, Sir Briobris rode up, and seeing Breus with the three knights supposed that they had taken him into custody. But suddenly Sir Arecco came against Briobris, thinking all the time he was Breus, and each struck the other with great force. It happened that Sir Briobris beat Sir Arecco and then defeated Sir Astore di Mare, and when he jousted with Prezzivale the two of them went to earth with their horses. When Breus saw the four knights all overthrown, he waited for nothing, but rode among them striking them with his horse's chest and feet and with the lance he held in his hand, shouting and saying, "Aha, evil knights, you are all dead, for all four of you are my mortal enemies, and therefore I want to take you!"

In this way he wounded each one of them somehow, but as he looked around he saw that Sir Arecco had remounted. Then he dared not stay, but began to retreat at great speed, and got out of there as if he were being chased by a bolt of lightning.

Then Briobris stood up and said to the others, "Sir knights, you are much to blame. You certainly make a great mistake to come to the defense of a person such as this Breus sanza Pietà, because the way he lives is a shame and a dishonor to all knights errant."

"What, knight?" said Prezzivale. "Was that Breus who just did this and then fled away?"

"Yes, it was, by my faith," said Briobris; "it was certainly he."

Then the knights were all confused, and, recognizing Briobris, they told him how they had been deceived. And afterwards, with a good laugh, they got on their horses and rode back to the city of Camellotto.

Now we turn back to Tristano, who had stayed at the fountain all alone because when Briobris went chasing Breus, Palamidesso had pursued Briobris to vindicate his shame, for Briobris had knocked him down horse and all, even though Palamidesso was by far a better knight than he.

So Tristano went back to Gioiosa Guardia, returning to Queen Isotta all happy and cheerful to tell her about the way the tournament would work which King Artù had ordered to be held before the beautiful castle at Verzeppe.

XCIII.

After Tristano had gone back to Gioiosa Guardia, he woke to find the next day bright and clear. He armed himself, got on his horse, and went straight to the fountain where he had been the day before. Here he waited to see if any knight might come by who could tell him for certain about the plans for the tournament. When he had been there for quite a while, an armed knight rode into the clearing. Seeing Tristano, he greeted him saying, "Who are you, knight?"

And Tristano replied, "Truly I am a knight errant resting beside this fountain. But who are you, that have asked my name?"

Then he said, "I am a knight searching for a knight I cannot find. Every day I meet knights, but never the one I am looking for. Truly, sir, I am called Dinadano. The one I am looking for is a knight recently come to this country, and he is my great friend and my lord. He is called Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia.

Know that this was the same Sir Dinadano who had loved Tristano so much before, because Tristano had saved him from an evil death at the hands of Sir Lancilotto during the defense of Gioiosa Guardia. Tristano also loved Dinadano very much, and loved to tease him.

Seeing him now made Tristano very happy, but he replied just to irritate him a little, "Knight, you say you want to know my name, and I say that I am a knight errant. You might have heard me very well if you were not deaf."

Then Dinadano got very angry and said to Tristano, "Knight, where do you get such nerve to talk back to your betters? For, by my faith, I will find out your name whether you like it or not."

"And how, sir?" said Tristano. "Would you force me to tell it?"

"I will force you and dishonor you," answered Dinadano, "and I will drown you in this fountain for saying I am deaf."

Then Tristano, to make him even angrier, said, "By my faith, when I first saw you it seemed to me that you were a wise knight, but now on the contrary: you look like a fool. Has love made you forgetful, that you want to fight with me because I won't tell you my name?"

Then Dinadano replied, "Knight, fighting is not a bit crazy,[26] because in a fight a man either wins or loses, but in love he can do nothing but lose."

"What?" said Tristano. "Aren't you a lover? Yet you told me that you were a knight errant."

"But I am not an arrant fool, and as such I hold the man who is hindered by love," said Dinadano.

"By my faith," replied Tristano, "It was not very long ago that a knight who was never embarrassed by love happened nevertheless to fall in love

with the lady Losanna of the Torre Antica. Because of this infatuation he grew angry with his companion, and was wounded by him in a fight. This companion was called Tristano of Cornovaglia. Perhaps you remember hearing about this?"

Dinadano answered and said, "That is who I am looking for."

"By my faith," said Tristano, "I saw him just the other evening near the cross roads at Croce. I jousted with him, and beat him twice, and he was also defeated by two knights near the water mill."

Dinadano, hearing this, grew very angry. He lost control of himself and struck Tristano on the chest with the butt of his lance, saying, "What evil loss has occurred? Is Sir Tristano such a knight to let you beat him thus? For, by my faith, if you were with Lancilotto and ten other knights errant he would not give way to you, for he is the most redoubtable knight in the world. I don't know of any knight who could make Tristano turn his shield in fear; he has accomplished more adventures in thirteen years than other knights have managed in a hundred."

Then Tristano said, "Then I must be mistaken, for the knight of whom I speak is now well over eighty."

"Mistaken and foolish I hold you," said Dinadano, "And whoever has anything to do with you."

Then he left and rode on toward Gioiosa Guardia, and Tristano let him go, quietly staying where he was.

While Tristano lingered by the fountain, two more knights errant came along: one was Palamidesso and the other was Gariette. When they came together, Sir Palamidesso challenged Tristano to joust. They spurred against each other and, at the lowering of the lances, delivered two great blows. Palamidesso broke his lance on Tristano, but Tristano knocked him to earth, and then did the same to Sir Gariette. When Tristano had beaten Palamidesso, he did not let him remount, but demanded that he tell his name, so Palamidesso told him.

Tristano thought a little, then said, "Palamidesso, have you any mortal enemy in the world?"

"By my faith," said Palamidesso, "I don't believe I have a single one, except for a bold knight who is called Tristano of Cornovaglia. Our quarrel was over a lady who is now in his power."

"Would you kill him," asked Tristano, "if you could?"

"By my faith, no," said Palamidesso, "for I would like very much that he become my friend, since as his enemy I have nothing but dishonor. But I am sure he would never make such an agreement with me, for gladly would he kill me. Right now, in fact I am looking for Sir Tristano, for I have been told that he is in this neighborhood, and I think he may be staying at Gioiosa Guardia.

"When I was jousting with Sir Lancilotto the other day, he said to me,

'Now, Palamidesso, Gioiosa Guardia is worth more than any other place in the world, for it holds a noble treasure.' Therefore I imagine that this treasure is Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta, because those two are the ones who excel all others in the world in beauty, prowess, and courtesy."

When he heard these words, Tristano allowed Palamidesso to remount and then let his lance fall, since Palamidesso had broken his. Then he spoke in this way: "Palamidesso, Palamidesso, here is this Tristano you have been searching for. Come and fight me, if you want to. If not, I am willing to stop because of those words you spoke. I am your enemy, but I am ready to make peace with you. Still, if it would please you to fight, I am ready to do battle with you. You may choose whichever pleases and delights you the most."

Palamidesso replied, "Surely, Tristano, the man who could have you for a friend would be foolish to want you for an enemy. Therefore I ask that there be peace and good friendship between us."

It was in this way that the two barons who had been enemies for a long time reached an accord. Gariette was very glad of their reconciliation, and asked Palamidesso to say which knight seemed boldest to him, either Tristano or Lancilotto.

Palamidesso replied, "I have tried them both, but it would be villainy to choose between them in the presence of one of them. Still, by my faith as a knight, I will tell you the truth, as it seems to me: there is as much similarity between Lancilotto and Tristano as there is between silver and gold."

Then Tristano asked the two knights to stop this discussion and be his guests at Gioiosa Guardia. The knights then rode in that direction, and when they arrived at the main palace they found the lady, Queen Isotta, all happy and joyous, attended by ladies and maidens. When Tristano told her how he and Palamidesso had made peace, she was very glad of it, and welcomed the knights with much honor. Then the tables were set out, and they all sat down to eat.

As they were eating, a squire came into the hall saying to Tristano, "Sir, there is a knight errant outside who wants to come in, and because the gate was not opened as quickly as he wished he said he was going to burn the castle and whoever held it. He is staying in the town outside, and he carries this insignia."

Tristano, when he heard these words, began to laugh out loud, saying, "By my faith, we are going to entertain our Sir Dinadano." Then he said to the queen, "We will go into the next room and you send for Dinadano, but don't let him recognize you. Then get him into a conversation about love and listen well to what he says, for he will certainly make you laugh and give us all great pleasure."

Then the queen sent a graceful squire to summon him, and when the

squire came before Dinadano, he said, "Sir knight, the lady of the castle asked if you would please come and speak with her."

"Pretty darling friend, I believe you must be wrong, or that you have badly understood your errand, for I am sure she would not send for me."

"Sir," said the squire, "do come to her, for I am certain she sent me for you. She is a lady who gladly honors all knights errant."

Dinadano said, "I'm coming."

Then he entered the fortress on foot, because no one entered there on horseback except Tristano or Lancilotto. When Dinadano came into the palace, the queen honored him greatly and had him sit down beside her, treating him with great courtesy and engaging him in conversation. After they had eaten, they went to sit beside the great fire that the season made necessary, and the queen said, "Sir knight, as God gives you good fortune, what is your name?"

He answered at once, "Truly, lady, I am called Dinadano. I don't know if you have ever heard of me."

"I have certainly heard of you!" said the queen. "And it wasn't long ago that I heard you loved a beautiful lady for whose sake you rode through the world doing deeds of arms."

"Lady," declared Dinadano, "surely the one who told you that deceived you, or you did not hear him well, for love has never so afflicted my heart that I would wear myself out in deeds of arms. It was not long ago that I became arrogant because of love, but it was the wine that made me do it. I fell in love with a lady and because of her I grew angry with my great friend Sir Tristano, and he gave me such a blow that I nearly died. That was the first time and it will be the last that ever I was troubled by love."

"What!" said the queen. "If you find a lovely, noble lady who loves you, will you not return her love?"

And Dinadano answered, "I promise you, such foolishness will not do for me. The one who loves uses his life in vain!"

Then Isotta said, "Knight, you are very wise, and such wisdom cannot exist without prowess."

Dinadano replied, "By my faith, I know of no knight who could make me turn my shield in fear."

"Truly, by my honor," said Isotta, "it is good to see you, and I hold your coming worth much, for I have strong need of your great prowess. I am sure that you will counsel and defend me well."

"Lady," said Dinadano, "I have already righted many wrongs, and I have defended and saved many ladies and maidens, since for no other reason am I a knight errant except to defend right against wrong. So if I can be of use here in that way, command me boldly."

Then the queen said, "Dinadano, three leagues from here there is a very bold knight who, against all that is right, demands tribute from me. So,

if you are willing, I want you to free me from his demands."

Dinadano, hearing these words, believed they were true and did not answer. Then Isotta said, "Knight, will you answer me? Will you help me, as you said you are supposed to do, and as you say you have done in the past?"

Dinadano said, "Lady, you say I should fight for you against a bold knight. Lady, surely, talk is cheap and fighting is very dangerous. The first prayer I make every morning is that God will not send any knights of too great a boldness against me, for by such as those I have been many times disgraced. I am very dear to those who brought me up in this world, and I don't want to get mixed up in anything that might do me harm."

Then the queen said, "Dinadano, for God's sake, don't abandon me in my need, or to so great a danger! From now on I will be your servant, and you may command me however you please!"

Dinadano replied, "For such words I will do worse than ever, and if you say any more to me, I will leave this fortress at once, this evening! You say that I should fight and put myself in danger of death for your sake, but don't think I will be such a fool. For if I lose, I will bear all the damage, and that will not do you any good."

"Then you are not as bold as you said?" Isotta asked.

"I am as bold as any other knight," said Dinadano, "but I am still suffering from a blow I got the other day."

Then the queen said, "Noble sir, tonight I will make you a good and precious bath, then your pain will soon go away. Then when you are cured you can fight for my sake."

Dinadano replied, "By my faith, such words will make the pain come back. I know for certain that if I were well and happy I would not fight unless I could see I had a big advantage. But now I want to conserve my strength and not fight with anyone until the tournament at Verzeppe, for I am a knight in whom King Artù has great hopes."

The queen said, "Dinadano, the hour is late. If you please, let us go lie down, so we might take great pleasure and delight with each other."

Dinadano replied, "Whoever vexes himself with such pleasures abuses his body and damages his soul. Such merchandise is not for me."

And the queen answered him, "Sir Dinadano, don't say anything more, because with such words as those you will make me fall out of love, you'll destroy all desire."

"Lady, you be quiet, for it is my words that glorify and chase all sorrow away!"

At that point, the queen commanded to be brought in a costly steel helmet which had a noble crest of azure silk and was engraved with two fine golden coronets. Then she said to Dinadano, "I give you this elegant helmet, that you may wear it at the assembly for my sake."

"Lady," said Dinadano, "This I will gladly do, if only I may keep it until

the end of the tournament, so that no other knight, on seeing it, might take it away from me for love of you. Because, lady, lady, I have no wish to die for the sake of your infatuation."

And Queen Isotta: "Truly, Dinadano, if you like I will come with you."

"By my faith, by my faith, don't do it!" said Dinadano. "Because I have decided not to buy trouble. If you must come, I will ride ahead of you, so that if any knight says anything I will not have to defend you; on the contrary, I will say you are not under my guard."

And Isotta said, "Alas, sir, that would be to your great shame!"

Dinadano replied, "Shame is a bad thing, but a wound is worse."

At that, their conversation ended. The queen had Dinadano led to rest in a luxurious room, then Tristano, Palamidesso, and Gariette returned to the great hall to have the biggest laugh in world. They ordered that the room be locked from the outside in the morning, to make Dinadano think that he had been taken prisoner.

When morning came, Dinadano got up, armed himself, and went to the door of the room to go out. Finding it locked, he called out in a loud voice, and at that Isotta came to a window and said, "Sir knight, you are in my prison and you will never get away if first you do not swear to do battle for me against all other knights."

Dinadano answered and said, "Alas, lady, you said you would not be false, but I can well see that if others are bad you are far, far worse, and thus you have deceived me falsely."

As Isotta and Dinadano stood talking thus, a squire came up who said to Isotta, "Lady, three knights errant have arrived, and one is called Sir Tristano, another Palamidesso, and the other is Gariette. Come and greet them."

Dinadano, hearing this, said to the squire, "Alas, valet, for courtesy's sake, ask these three knights to come to me."

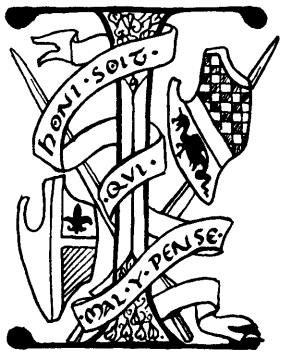
The squire did so, and the three knights came to him, and Dinadano begged Tristano to deliver him from the hands of this false and evil woman. Then Isotta opened the door, and when Dinadano came out of the room he put his hand to his sword as if he would strike the queen.

Then Tristano pretended to become very angry, saying, "Alas, my dear Sir Dinadano, I did not know that I had offended you so much that you would do me such a great dishonor. Not only did you strike me at the fountain day before yesterday, but now you speak and act villainously to Queen Isotta, and have not a care for my love."

Then Dinadano thought a little, and when he truly realized that this was Queen Isotta, he became very sorry, and threw himself down on his knees, saying to the queen, "Highest lady, for God's sake and for pity's sake, pardon me. For, by my faith, I never recognized you, and I am sure that Tristano has made you do what you have done. God will surely take vengeance on him on my behalf!"

At that point, they all had the biggest laugh in the world, and everyone took great pains to console Dinadano. Their joy was great, and all four of them decided to go to the tournament together, and take with them the beautiful queen, Isotta the Blonde.

XCIV.



n this part the story tells that when the time came appointed for the tournament, King Artù, Queen Ginevara, Sir Lancilotto and all the kinsmen of King Bando, King Lotto, King Pellinoro, King Allielle, King Agalone, and the king of Orbellanda, along with all the knights errant and their kin, gathered at the castle of Verzeppe. On the other side there gathered twelve crowned kings and foreign knights from twelve countries.

Meanwhile, at Gioiosa Guardia, Sir Tristano called Palamidesso, Dinadano, and Gariette to his side, saying to them, "My lords, my lords, we ought to be on our way to this assembly, and Queen Isotta with us. For myself, I have decided to go as secretly as I can and enter myself as a foreigner on the side of the King of Irlanda, so I can prove myself against all the knights errant. For I am not now a knight errant or a member of the Tavola Ritonda, but a subject of Queen Isotta. It is as her champion that I go to this assembly, and since she is a foreign lady, it seems right to me that I enter myself as a foreign knight."

Then Palamidesso, Dinadano, and Gariette said that seemed good to them, for the honor of Queen Isotta. At that they got together everything they needed in order to travel most honorably. They made some insignia all in green, and others all in black, and these banners both had on them a golden coronet for Queen Isotta's sake, in whose service they rode. Tristano also had two sets of insignia made secretly for himself. One was vermilion, with a coronet of gold for love of Queen Isotta, and the other, in her service, was her own emblem, an azure field crossed by a band of silver, each side of which was bordered with gold.

Then the four knights armed themselves to great advantage, and Queen Isotta dressed herself in fine silken robes covered with embroidery, with buttons on the bodice and the sleeves worth more than a thousand bezants. The robes were secured with a marvellous belt made of golden wire inlaid with eight hundred precious stones, of which the least one was worth a hundred gold dinars. Then she had set on her head a crown made all of gold and set with very precious stones; it had three carbuncles set in the lower part that even in the darkest night shone with such splendor that they could light the way for 300 ladies and just as many knights (that crown was worth a good city). Finally, she put two gloves on her hands worth more than 300 bezants of gold.

Then Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante lifted her onto a costly white palfrey covered with samite and cloth of silk all embroidered with birds and graceful deer, with a saddle of crystal and ivory which was covered with gold and precious stones.

Dinadano and Gariette rode in front, then after them, preceding the queen, came sixty young men dressed in very beautiful silken clothes of fine cloth in beautiful colors. They were all young and unarmed, and all wore azure caps embroidered with a golden crown. Then came sixty officers of the court in silk vestments, elegant robes of azure with golden coronets embroidered on them. After them rode the beautiful, well-born Isotta, between Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante. Behind the queen rode sixty damsels all dressed in the elegant robes of a religious order, and in the rear rode Sir Tristano and Sir Palamidesso.[27]

They rode thus until they reached the lovely plain of Falonorsa. There they met along the way the King of a Hundred Knights who was riding to the tournament accompanied by 880 bold foreign knights. When the king saw Dinadano, riding in front, wearing that helmet with its graceful crest, he challenged him to joust. Dinadano, who was feeling proud because of the good company surrounding him, rode forward. At once they attacked each other, and traded two strong blows.

Dinadano broke his lance on the king, but the king struck Dinadano so skillfully that he knocked him off his horse. Then the king unsheathed his sword, saying, "Knight, either you give me that helmet, or I will cut off your head."

Then Dinadano, without another word, unlaced the helmet and tossed it to the king. Then he said, "As long as you can be its owner, I won't be."

The king, who was very courteous, said to Dinadano, "Knight, don't anger yourself too much about this helmet, for if you please, for courtesy's sake, I want to give it back to you."

"Don't do me this courtesy," said Dinadano, "because since the thing pleased you so much, it will be likely to please another who will do worse by me than you have done. I have a cool heart; I don't know why my head made

me act so warmly. But, since all evil comes from the head, this helmet might have made me break all my bones."

Then the king commanded his squire to take the helmet, but at those words, Tristano came forward, saying, "Valet, valet, don't touch that helmet!"

"Why shouldn't he touch it?" asked the king. "Have I not won it fairly?"

"Yes, you have," answered Tristano. "But now I want to win it back from you myself."

Then without further exchange they separated and began to fight. The king struck Tristano a great blow on his shield, but Tristano hit him and sent him sprawling to the ground. Afterwards Tristano picked up the helmet to give it back to Dinadano, and the king remounted and went on his way.

But Dinadano told Tristano that he would in no way wear that helmet any more, and said that it was not made for him.

Tristano said, "How can you say you won't wear it, when you have taken it and promised Queen Isotta that you will?"

Dinadano answered, "If I promised her, I now unpromise her. I don't want such trouble because of her helmet, not I! She doesn't come forward to take the blows herself, but just laughs and mocks, it seems to me, when someone else is beaten. What an evil thing the city of Londres did when it sent her to Cornovaglia, and you when you took her there, and King Marco when he received her. I well believe you will all live to regret it."

Tristano asked, "Why should King Marco regret it? Don't you think the queen is good enough for him?"

"Yes, she would have been," said Dinadano, "except that evil intervened. For if he had her first, you now hold and possess her, thus wronging King Languis and robbing King Marco. So I tell you you aren't going to force me to wear others' baubles against my will. Wear it yourself. You defend it better than I do."

At these words, Tristano was silent, but Palamidesso said, "Dinadano, Dinadano, courtesy of tongue costs little and is worth much. Therefore I beg you, speak courteously, and don't say evil things about others, because such rudeness does nothing but shame the speaker."

"Do you know how it is, Palamidesso? You talk big," said Dinadano, "because you have made peace with Tristano. But I am sure this peace will not last long, since you have not made it for love, but out of fear and because you are in love with Queen Isotta, who as it happens loves no one at all except Sir Tristano."

Then Palamidesso became so quiet and as small as he could. And Gariette said, "By my faith, Dinadano, Palamidesso is not to blame if he reminds you that you ought to be courteous of speech."

Dinadano answered him at once: "Yes, by God, and you are a courteous guest. You showed it well in the forest of Lionferfero, when you killed the

unarmed vavasor just because he did not want you to rape his daughter." Then Gariette hung his head and said nothing more.

Know that Dinadano was so unhappy because he had been beaten in front of the queen. Tristano, to make him feel better, took his helmet and gave him his, which had a golden lion cub for a crest, saying, "Dinadano, for courtesy's sake, guard this helmet well, for it was given to me by the most desirable, prettiest damsel in the world, she for whose sake more than twenty bold knights have died."

When he heard this, Dinadano did not want to take the helmet, bur rather said, "By my faith, I am not prepared to seek trouble, because I get into enough without looking for it, and I certainly will not bear the penalty of another's wrongs." Then he took back his own helmet and, drawing his sword, sliced off the crest, saying, "Bad luck to the gaudy thing and to the one who gives it!"

And the queen, laughing heartily, said, "Dinadano, you are not wise and you do not act courteously to destroy the gifts given you by your betters."

And Dinadano replied, "Lady, lady, if I am not wise, teach me; you have learned so well for yourself. Well it shows how wise you are that you have left King Marco and the kingdom of Cornovaglia, and go now through the world playing jokes on people. But it is nothing to marvel at that you've learned this in Cornovaglia, where the people are so gifted. The men are all cowardly, proud, and greedy, and the women are drunkards, liars, and whores—they are bartered ten to one, like baubles for money."

Then Brandina said, "Alas, Sir Dinadano, why do you speak thus against the queen, with no regard for Tristano's love?"

"Don't push me, Brandina, don't," said Dinadano, "for I know about you. You guarded Isotta for King Marco so well on board that ship that you gave Tristano the potion, and because of that, King Marco has no more happiness."

Sir Lantris said, "Dinadano, if you try to answer every word, you are trying to do too much."

"I will not answer you, Sir Lantris, for you are a new-made knight. But you will be new right up to the end, if you learn nothing more about high prowess but how to accompany the ladies."

At that point Tristano and his companions all had a good laugh, then they were quiet. As they rode across the broad plain beside the great river, they saw drifting with the current a small boat covered with black samite. In the boat was a bed on which there lay a king newly dead, and he had the iron tip of a lance embedded in his chest. In his hand there was a letter, and he was accompanied by ten noble barons.

Tristano and Palamidesso approached these men and asked what this meant. Those in the boat answered that this was a king who had been killed by a bold knight who was his vassal: "But who and where he is we cannot say. The letter he holds tells what happened; whoever opens it must do what the letter says."

Then Palamidesso, who was very proud for Isotta's sake, stepped forward and took the letter, opening it to see what it would say. The letter said this: "To any knight errant or foreign knight who may read this letter: the truth is that I was killed by a treacherous knight who was my sworn vassal. I was from the city of Vermiglia, and was called Arduano, king of the realm of Tuscia. Much I loved the knights errant of my household and honored chivalry; therefore, to whomever will take on himself the task of avenging my death I will give the lordship of the city of Vermiglia."

When he read the letter, Palamidesso was very saddened by what it said, because he was reluctant to leave this company. Still, he did take leave of them, thinking he would soon come back to the assembly. Then he got into the boat.

They coasted along the great river until they came to the city of Vermiglia, where they rested a little. They went on past Arnuale and came to the castle of the Saraziana, above the great port of Mortinale, eight leagues from the city of Quadro.

And there Palamidesso killed the bold knight Passauver, who had done King Arduano to death. Palamidesso was made king of the country and the province, then he left as his viceroy a knight who was called Sir Provaldino, and afterwards departed, heading straight for the piedmont to reach the tournament.

Now the story stops telling about Sir Palamidesso, who has finished his quest, and we will remind ourselves of Sir Tristano and his companions.

XCV.

The masters of the story set down that when Tristano and Palamidesso parted Tristano rode on so that in six days he came to the field where the tournament was to be. Riding through the meadow he saw there were multitudes of shelters, tents, and pavilions, and he looked for the most convenient place to pitch camp. Then a knight who was called Agravale, seeing Tristano and the lady riding so honorably, approached them and said to Tristano, "Knight, you seem to be from a foreign land. I am a knight errant, placed here by King Artù to receive vistors. If you please, you may stay near my pavilion, and I tell you it is the best place on the field."

Tristano said that pleased him very well. When he came to that place, he had set up three beautiful and costly pavilions made all of embroidered

silk and decorated with cords of silk vermilion. Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante helped Queen Isotta to dismount and led her into one of the pavilions. Then Tristano asked Agravale how the tournament would work, and whether many people were gathered yet.

"My lord," said Agravale, "truly the most important people in the world are assembled here, the greatest barons of greatest name since the Tavola was built. Tomorrow after nones the first mêlée will begin, one for new-made knights and those of lesser reputation. You should enter this, if you want to, because you are a young knight."

Now know that Agravale spoke as he wanted to and not as he should. He did not know that this knight was Tristano, and so he did not know about his prowess and his courage. Be assured that neither great size nor great age makes a bold knight, but rather it is good courage and a bold heart along with nobility and courtesy—these are the things that make a knight proud and brave and noble and secure. Therefore, when a man just starting out has the help and power of a proud heart, the blood which swells through his heart gives him comfort, courage, and natural power.

As they stood speaking thus, Tristano said to Agravale, "Then tell me, as God may save you, where does King Artù hold his court?"

"Sire," said Agravale, "King Artù and all the knights errant are staying in the castle of Verzeppe, except for Sir Lancilotto and his kinsmen, who have raised three pavilions on the field, in the great meadow. They are the guardians of the field.

"Queen Ginevara and the other ladies of the knights errant will all stand on the walls of the castle to watch, and all the ladies of the foreign knights will be on the great wooden stand built in the center of the field. King Artù is well prepared to hold the first encounter with the first foreign knights."

"By my faith," said Sir Tristano, "King Artù's people are very fine, but they will have much to do, so many people have come against them."

Agravale asked Tristano what country he was from and Tristano replied, "Truly, we are with the foreign lady from the country of Irlanda."

The next day a proclamation was sent through the field saying that every young knight, after eating, should arm himself and mount his horse to come to the first assembly. There were to be four assemblies in four days, and that knight who was victorious, the one who showed the greatest prowess, could take the standard which was set in the middle of the field and carry it to the winning side. The victory would be declared after the last battle on the last day; that is, the tournament having been finished, the decision would be given.

XCVI.

Now if I am asked from what side that proclamation came, I will say both from King Artù, captain and leader of the knights errant, and from King Amoroldino of Irlanda, that is, from Sir Gulistante, captain and leader in arms of the foreign knights. These two put an official in the middle, that is, a general master of ceremonies, a man named Sir Ansalerino. He was the king of Norgales, and because of his virtue, loyalty, and wisdom, both sides had confidence in him. All the announcements and commands would come from him, and he was given the power of saying truthfully who had won and who had lost.

He had the standard set in the middle of the field. It was all vermilion with two small shields, one with the insignia of King Artù, and the other with that of young King Amoroldino. The victorious knight, he who was best of all, was to take it and carry it to the winning side, but no one was to move it or touch it without Sir Ansalerino's permission.

When the proclamation went out, all the young knights of unproved reputation armed themselves, mounted, and came to the field. Sir Gulistante and Sir Lantris helped Isotta to mount, then brought her to sit on the great wooden stand with the other foreign ladies. Queen Isotta sat in the center between Queen Vermiglia, the wife of King Amoroldino, and Queen Onia, the wife of the king of Scozia.

At that the officer, that is Sir Ansalerino, had the trumpets sounded, and the knights began to attack from both sides. Into this mêlée there entered Sir Astore di Mare, Lionello, Maraghise, Sir Adolange, Dodinello, and many other knights errant, while on the other side came King Governale, and the king of Gualagne, Dinadano, Sir Lantris, and many other foreign knights.

Tristano and Gariette stood watching, disarmed except for their swords. The knights fought in such a way that they traded great blows, broke their lances, reached for their swords—the clashing of iron blades was loud. As Tristano watched, he saw that Astore and Lionello held Dinadano and were going to kill him; then Tristano, all unarmed, rode at once to his aid, and sword in hand, saw that he was remounted.

Know that in this lesser mêlée the kinsmen of King Bando took the honors, especially Sir Lionello. At that, all the people returned to their places, and Gulistante and Lantris went to escort the queen.

And when she arrived, she made all other ladies disappear. The brightness of her lovely face made the beauties of all other women disappear, and well she seemed the flower and the honor of all the tournament. All the foreign ladies attended her to her pavilion, and when they parted there, each one said, "Good-bye, lovely rose; you are the flower of all ever born in this world.

It would not be surprising if your lord, for love of you, overcame King Artù and all his men, for not only anyone embracing you, but anyone simply looking at you, ought to become very brave and very proud."

When Isotta had returned to the pavilion, the tables were set out and food was prepared, and when water had been brought for their hands they sat down to eat. As they ate, Gariette looked out and saw Palamidesso going by looking for them, and pointed him out to Sir Tristano. Tristano got up and went to meet him, taking him by the hand and leading him into the pavilion, where he disarmed and sat at the table. They all passed that night in great joy.

In the morning, the queen dressed herself in fine silken robes, new and of beautiful colors, with a crown on her head which shone with great splendor and a magnificent belt worth more than three rich castles. The two knights seated her on a palfrey covered with silk, then Palamidesso, Gariette, and Dinadano accompanied her to the stand and seated her with nine queens, who honored her greatly and had her sit in their midst.

Know that Sir Tristano did not choose to take arms that day, because he wanted to give Palamidesso the praise and the honor; he would be very pleased that his friend bore himself valiantly, and he knew that he was very famous for deeds of arms. When Palamidesso rode onto the field, he saw large numbers of knights errant and foreign knights. Most of the kinsmen of King Bando were there, except for Lancilotto, who also would not take arms that day.

The trumpets sounded once, twice, and at the third blast the knights began to joust. King Bordo, who came first, struck the King of a Hundred Knights with such force that he knocked him out of the saddle, and Sir Prezzivale defeated the King of Scozia, and Sir Calvano overcame Agravano, wounding him badly. Bold Palamidesso, accompanied by Gariette, Dinadano, and Sir Lantris, all carrying black pennons, came terrorizing knights and barons, so that Palamidesso with his great strength unhorsed Sir Calvano and Sir Briobris, and did such deeds of arms that it was marvellous to watch.

Although Palamidesso was always a proud, bold, strong knight at arms, he had never before done the half of what he did that day. This was because many times he looked toward the viewing stand where the ladies were sitting and saw the bright face of the beautiful Isotta, and every time he did, the power of his blows was doubled. Because of this, he did such deeds of arms that everyone gave way before him.

In the second assembly Palamidesso truly took all the honors, so that pretty soon Lancilotto couldn't stand it any longer. Seeing that Palamidesso was doing such deeds he armed himself at once, mounted, and entered the mêlée. The first blow he struck was at Palamidesso, and it sent him to the ground. After that Lancilotto defeated many other foreign knights; when his lance broke he drew his sword and began to strike again, and did such deeds of

arms that in a little while he had routed King Amoroldino's side.

This displeased Sir Tristano very much, because Sir Lancilotto showed a little villainy here to take arms against tired and winded knights. Most people still agreed that Palamidesso had won the honor of the day.

At that, each side turned back, and Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante escorted Queen Isotta from the stand and led her to her pavilion. Palamidesso came back very happy and joyous, strutting about, and Tristano, like a loyal knight and a baron without envy, gave him great praise.

When the third day came, before the tournament began again, Tristano and Palamidesso and their company decked themselves in green insignia and led Queen Isotta to the ladies' viewing stand. Coming onto the meadow, they found that King Artù, Sir Lancilotto, and all the knights errant had already arrived, and had formed four great ranks, the least of which had four thousand knights—all those of Grande Brettagna, Gaules, Longres, and Organia. Queen Ginevara and all the other queens and ladies of the knights errant had mounted scaffolding built on the castle walls so they could watch.

On the other side was King Amoroldino and twelve other crowned kings. The foreign knights of twelve kingdoms had formed six great troops, and the smallest had six thousand knights.

At the sound of the trumpets, the knights began to fight. So great was the noise of their spirited horses and the clash of steel and the shouts of the knights that truly thunder would not have been heard. And so great was the furor, the unhorsing of knights, the falling of horses, and the clashing of shields that it seemed like the end of the world. So great was the smoke of sweat from horses and knights, and so thick was the dust, that the air was almost like a cloud, and the men could scarcely see each other.

Bold Lancilotto, who first rode out, struck Palamidesso and sent him to earth, then sent the king of Sobicio dead to the ground, and then he overcame King Governale. And proud Sir Tristano, who had defeated Sir Bordo, Prezzivale, Sir Ivano, and Sir Brunoro the Black, saw that Lancilotto had beaten Palamidesso and approached him shouting, "Knight, guard yourself against me!"

Then they rode toward each other. Lancilotto struck Tristano such a blow on the shield with his lance that he made him bend over the saddlebow, but Tristano, who was fighting like a lion, struck Lancilotto with such force that he sent man and horse to earth. Then he immediately defeated the king of Norgales, Sir Briobris, and Sir Lac; before his lance was broken he had sent nine bold knights of great name to the ground.

After that, he beat the king of Nerbois; truly this assault between the two brave knights cost Nerbois his life. Then, his lance broken, Tristano unsheathed his sword and did such feats of arms that the people could hardly believe their eyes. Truly, he gave so many and such great blows that no

one dared to wait for him: everyone gave way to him out of fear.

Looking around, Tristano saw that Lancilotto had not yet remounted, because four knights surrounded him and would not let him get back on his horse. Then Tristano the courteous struck at the four knights with the flat of his sword until Lancilotto could remount.

When he was remounted, the battle was very great, and all the people began to shout, "Viva! Viva! The brave knight of the green pennon! Viva the foreign knights!"

Then King Artù's knights were all truly put to flight, and never had so much prowess or so many amazing deeds been displayed by one knight as when the bold and courteous Sir Tristano, in such a short time, overcame so many knights. He even took them in his hands and threw them over their saddlebows onto the ground. Truly, Tristano worked in many ways to make himself felt by the kinsmen of King Bando.

King Artù, seeing that his people were all dismayed, felt great sorrow, and anger, and in great wisdom had the gates of the castle shut so that Tristano could not come inside. That would be too much dishonor because of the ladies who were there.

When Tristano had conquered the field, he spurred to the castle gate, looking like a fierce and savage lion. I want you to understand well that Tristano, at that point, had done everything he could to show all the people his great power and amazing courage, and when he found the gates locked against him, he was greatly disturbed by it. Therefore he hung his shield on it, to demonstrate his worth.

Then all the people cried in one voice, "Viva, viva, valorous knight! You have silenced all the others!"

At that, Tristano returned to his pavilion, and when Agravale came back, Tristano asked him for news about who had taken the honor and the prize of the tournament. Agravale replied that a knight with green insignia was the victor and had won the honor. He had done such deeds of arms that he would be remembered always. He beat Sir Lancilotto and more than thirty-five other knights, and he had only fought with the best and most proven men at the tournament.

"But it seemed to me that Lancilotto knew him, because when Lancilotto was beaten King Artù rebuked him, and he replied, 'Sire, Sire, it is no shame to be beaten by a bolder knight than I am.' "

And know that Sir Agravale had recognized the prowess of Sir Tristano very well, but he didn't want to say so. And Queen Isotta was very happy and joyous seeing her lover win so much honor; she felt great self-assurance because of it.

XCVII.

Now the story tells that in the evening, when King Artù and Sir Lancilotto had gone back to the great palace of the fortress, the king was very disappointed and ashamed, saying, "Alas, on this very day how much have I damaged my good name? I have summoned twelve crowned kings and the knights of their kingdoms to battle, and have got nothing from it but shame. I am routed by the power of a single knight! How can there be so much prowess in one man?"

Then Lancilotto said, "You and the knights errant are very unhappy because you've received nothing but shame from this great undertaking. But if you will act on my advice, you will still come out the victor. First, tell me if you recognize the knight of the green insignia who has given us so much trouble today?"

The king said, "Truly, no, I don't recognize him, but if I could find out who he is, I would gladly give a rich castle."

Lancilotto replied, "Sire, if you will give me a castle, I will tell you the name of the knight, and if you will give me another I will tell you what to do to avoid so much shame."

The king said he would be glad to, and Lancilotto said, "Sire, now know that this knight who has done so much to conquer the field is your servant the bold Sir Tristano. He has brought with him the lovely Isotta the Blonde, for love of whom you had this tournament called."

"Ah, Lancilotto, Lancilotto," said King Artù, "Well have you earned two castles: one because you have told me the name of this knight, and the other for the counsel you will give me. Now I will double the gift if you will arrange it so I may speak with Tristano and see the beautiful blonde Isotta."

Lancilotto replied, "Certainly, sire, it seems best to me that we both talk with Tristano, and that you ask him for your sake not to take arms tomorrow, the last day, so that the Tavola Ritonda not be disgraced because of him. But truly it seems to me that Tristano wants the entire prize of the tournament for himself alone, because he has with him the beautiful Isotta. Thus I know of no other remedy except for you to ask Tristano to enter the lists on your side, so that you will be the winner and he will still have all the praise and honor. If you don't do this, you are certain to be disgraced."

The king then said to Lancilotto, "You have certainly spoken wisely. Let us go find him."

So the two of them, alone and on foot, went out of the castle and made their way to Tristano's pavilion, for Lancilotto had earlier found out where it was. When they got there, they lifted the door flap without announcing themselves and went inside. Tristano, seeing two knights entering so privately,

leapt up saying, "Eh, knights, why did you not call out before you came in? Surely you are villainous knights and deserve great scorn!"

Then Lancilotto approached Tristano saying, "Pardon us, sir. We did it for security."

When Tristano looked he recognized Lancilotto at once and embraced him, and Lancilotto said, "Tristano, don't do me so much honor. Look, here is my lord King Artù, who has come to visit you."

Tristano fell to his knees at once, saying, "My lord, you are very, very welcome."

The king embraced him tightly, saying, "Tristano, the proverb applies to you which says of the villain, the more he offends, the more you want him for a friend. Thus it happens that we, who have this day been so beaten and injured, have come here to visit you for fear of worse.

"I want you to know that the Tavola Ritonda has never received so much dishonor as it has today, and that no one can reverse this except you yourself. We have come here to speak to you, and to see the beautiful Isotta, and to remind you that the honor and dishonor of the Tavola Ritonda rests mainly with you, because you are the one by whom it has always been most defended and honored. Know that if things go tomorrow as they have for the past three days, the Tavola will never again have honor. Therefore I ask you and command you that tomorrow you enter on the side of the knights errant, so our dishonor may be amended by you."

Without hesitation Tristano asked, "My lord king, do you counsel me to enter on the side other than the one I entered for love of Queen Isotta?"

The king replied, "Yes, Tristano, that is my advice. You came to this tournament to win honor, and you can see that the knights errant are less powerful than the foreign knights. It is more honorable for a man to enter on the less powerful side. There would be no mistake in doing this, for then you would be called the victor over all, and not just over one side.

"Also you ought to do it because you are a knight errant, and you are bound by that. What you have done today, you did to honor Queen Isotta; what you will do tomorrow will bring honor to us and all the knights errant. And if you will not, I will hold you a traitor to your high position."

Lancilotto begged Tristano to do the king's will.

Tristano said to them, "My lords, since it pleases you to command me so strongly to do your will, and since all that I have done through today was to the honor of Amoroldo and the foreign knights, I ask that Amoroldo be made a knight errant, like his father Amoroldo."

The king agreed, and had the book brought to him in which he wrote this down. Then he had the book sealed, so that it could be opened by no one but the gracious Galasso.

Then Tristano said, "King Artù, tomorrow from the first hour until midday I will fight for love of Queen Isotta against you and your knights, there-

fore be brave and bold to defend yourselves. Then after we eat I will change sides and wield my arms against the foreign knights."

The king thanked him heartily for this.

At that moment into the pavilion came four ladies with lighted torches in their hands, and in the midst of them was the beautiful Isotta, accompanied by ten stewards. Coming before King Artù and Lancilotto, she greeted them graciously, then the king took her by the hand and seated her beside him, saying, "Noble Queen, well met a thousand times, for you are the greatest queen ever to enter this kingdom."

And the queen said, "Great thanks, sire, for doing me so much honor. But I am justified by one thing: that I and all those under me are at your service and the service of Queen Ginevara, whom I desire to see more than any other lady. And I ask a favor of you—one for which you can have little regret—that when you next come before her, you greet her on my behalf."

The king said, "I take this greeting upon myself, to do your embassy."

"Many thanks," said the queen. "It is no small thing to have the highest king in the world as my ambassador."

The king replied, "By my faith and by my loyalty, I hold myself too much honored that I receive a command from you, for you are the noblest queen in the world."

As they were speaking this way and taking pleasure, Tristano, for a joke, said, "King Artù, I think you must not be as bold toward your own lady as you are toward the ladies of others."

And the king, laughing loudly, said, "Tristano, Tristano, since I am now in your lodging, it is right that I be friendly to all who are inside."

Tristano replied, "Sire, you will never lose an argument for not knowing how to argue and give good reasons, and you will gladly eat bread made of other men's wheat."

The king laughed and said, "Don't be a bully: the one who has the grain can have the bread. Therefore if you will give me Queen Isotta, I will give you Queen Ginevara and the castle of Verzeppe as well."

Then Tristano laughed and said, "King Artù, surely you know that I am not looking for Queen Ginevara or the castle of Verzeppe. Anyway, if you don't have the gate well guarded in the morning, sometime before nones I may just come in with my sharp sword in hand to win the castle and the queen and all the ladies who are inside."

The king said, "I will have the gates locked."

Tristano answered, "If you do, I will put to the sword all the knights I find there. And I will shame you even more, for you shall not drink in this pavilion with Queen Isotta."

"By my faith," said the king, "if you will have drinks brought, I will not lock the gates."

At that point the queen called for silver flasks and cups of gold, and had

drinks given to the king and to Lancilotto, along with many confections. Afterwards, they took leave and returned to the castle. There King Artù planned a subtle strategy, saying to himself, "If tomorrow Tristano fights two battles, and the one gives me a victory and the other a loss, it will be no honor for me, for King Amoroldo can claim the day a draw."

Then he thought that in the morning there might be a battle which would last the whole day, so that whichever side held the field when evening came would take the prize for the whole tournament. "Thus I could say I am the winner of the whole assembly rather than the winner of one of two battles." The king thought this because Tristano was going to come over to his side for the second half of the battle, and this would make him the victor. Tristano would do as they had commanded in the afternoon.

Then the king sent for Sir Ansalerino, and when he came, the king said, "Marshall, because tomorrow is the last day, let us proclaim one battle that will last from morning until evening, and disqualify all other battles, so that whoever has the victory in the evening will take tourney's prize."

Sir Ansalerino said he was well pleased with that, but first he wanted to find out if the other side agreed. Then he went to King Amoroldo and told him what King Artù had said. King Amoroldo, who did not know about the agreement between King Artù and Tristano, told Sir Ansalerino that he was well pleased.

At that point King Artù summoned sixty knights of Norgales and commanded that on the next day they do no other deeds of arms than to guard the gates of the castle. Then King Artù commanded all his knights of great name that they must henceforward be brave, ardent, and bold, and that they must not give in to fatigue until the hour of nones, since after nones they would have no need to wear themselves out, for another champion would arrive to defend their honor.

At that, all the people went to sleep. When dawn came a proclamation was cried through the field on behalf of Sir Ansalerino that every king and knight errant and foreign knight ought that morning to eat and drink then come to the field, knowing that the assembly would last until evening, and whoever found themselves the winners at sunset would take the honor and the prize of the whole tournament. Therefore every knight should be brave and bold and sure to strike well with lance and sword.

XCVIII.

As our book has shown, in the morning all the noblemen refreshed themselves by eating and drinking something, then armed, mounted, and rode onto the field. Sir Tristano and his companions wore black insignia, but Tristano, very secretly (so that no one knew except Queen Isotta, Sir Lantris, and Sir Dinadano) dressed himself in the colors described earlier, that is, the vermilion insignia, and underneath them he wore his own arms, the blue background crossed by a wide silver band between two narrow bands of gold. Then he put the queen on her palfrey and led her to the viewing stand of foreign ladies.

Coming onto the field, he saw King Artù, Lancilotto, and five great bands of knights errant and their supporters, and on the other side he found King Amoroldo, the King of Scozia, and ten great bands of foreign knights. Now, at the sound of the trumpets, according to custom, the two bands began to fight. As the knights fought, Tristano took off the black insignia and gave them to one of his squires, and displayed that of Queen Isotta, that is, the vermilion field with the golden crown. Then he rode forward and began to fight.

In one hour he defeated the high King of Norgales, Sir Calvano, and Sir Chieso, whom he wounded badly. He also beat Agravano, and sent King Artù off his horse in a heap, and he beat Sir Sagramore, King Agalone, and Sir Sagris, and at the tenth blow, he struck Sir Lancilotto.

And Lancilotto struck him: with those two great blows each one broke his lance and sent the other's horse to its knees, then they drew their swords. Lancilotto hit Tristano first, with such force that he made him strike his head on the saddlebow. Then Tristano grasped his own sword tightly, and for revenge, struck Lancilotto with such might just on his helmet that he knocked him off his horse and sent him sprawling on the ground.

Queen Ginevara was very unhappy about that blow, but she was not as sad as Isotta was happy, because each of them had given their love, the one to Tristano, and the other to Lancilotto. And when Lancilotto had remounted, Dinadano struck him sideways and sent him to earth again.

Then Sir Tristano rode through the mêlée doing such deeds of arms that it was a great marvel. The battle was huge and dangerous, and many barons and knights died on either side, so that many horses ran through the field with empty saddles, and over the ground were scattered many hands and heads and legs cut off, and many dead horses, and almost all of the swords of the barons were running with blood. There was such a great noise of horses and clashing of arms and sound of shouting warriors that it seemed like the end of the world.

Sir Tristano rode over the field sending horses and men to earth, and all the people cried, "Here is the falcon who storms the whole assembly!"

In a short time Tristano had routed King Artù's side and had come to the gate of the castle. When he saw the sixty knights, he looked at them in the manner of a snake and said, "Whoever stationed you here, knights, surely gave you evil advice."

Then he rode through them as a lion might rage through tiny beasts, and in a little while killed nine, so that the others gave way before him in terror. Thus he passed inside and was within the wall where the ladies were. Queen Ginevara gave him a garland of silk and beautiful flowers, and all the other ladies cried, "Viva, viva, the valorous knight who in his great prowess silences all others!" And almost everyone said that King Artù's side had been routed by the prowess of this single knight.

Tristano, having thus scattered King Artù's people, and taken the prize and the honor on behalf of King Amoroldo, retreated quietly to put off the vermilion insignia with their golden crowns and give them to one of his squires. Then he was left with his own insignia, the blue field crossed by the gold and silver bands. Then, at midday, when the sun stood at its highest, Tristano rode in on King Artù's side and began to fight against King Amoroldo and the foreign knights.

First of all he struck King Amoroldo with the butt end of his lance and sent him to earth, then he defeated the king of Scozia, badly wounding him, and then the King of a Hundred Knights, then Palamidesso. Before his lance was broken he had sent twenty-two knights to earth; then he took his sharp sword in hand and began to strike vigorously with that.

When Lancilotto saw this, he said to King Artù, "See, over there, your friend Tristano, who by his virtue will give you the victory in this tournament!"

"By my faith, by my faith, I could hear of a better friend I might remember for better service. This morning he struck me such blows that I will remember the pain of them for more than a month."

Then Tristano rode through the field like a lion with the knights errant rallying well behind him, especially the kinsmen of King Bando. When Tristano met the King of Guascogna he gave him such a blow that he knocked him dead to the earth, then he overcame the King of Sobicio and many other knights. Before the sun went behind the mountain, Tristano had routed King Amoroldo's side. Then he was very tired, and his arm muscles were swollen, especially the ones in his sword arm.

Then all the people began to shout out loud, "Viva, viva, the brave knight of the blue insignia with the silver band who has terrified all others!"

But some of the knights and also some of the people watching reasoned and said, "For certain, truly, the knight of the vermilion pennon is just as bold a knight, and has done just as well as this one has." Thus spoke the

ones who did not know how Tristano had disguised himself and changed his arms, and that he had in himself all the virtue and the valor of the first knight as well as the latter. But everyone talked about it. One said, "The knight of the vermilion pennon with the golden crown is just as bold as the one with the blue and silver flag."

And each spoke the truth, for Tristano had been the bold knight under each banner. And know that Tristano had so much self-restraint that at first he did not do as much as he might, so that the more he fought, the harder he struck. He redoubled his strength in such a way that he was as powerful at the end of the battle as he had been at the first.

When Tristano had routed one side and the other as he pleased, and done such deeds of arms that no other knight had done the half of them, Sir Ansalerino came forward, saying to him, "Knight, knight, as the moon is superior to the stars and the rose to all other flowers, and the lion over all other beasts, so you are superior to all other knights. Now I decree that you take the standard from the middle of the field and carry it to whichever side you wish, since both sides have been conquered because of your might."

So Tristano took the standard and rode with it over the meadow. When he came before Queen Isotta, he knelt and put it in her hand; then afterwards he took it to the castle and gave it to Queen Ginevara, who had it placed on the great tower, flying so high that all the people below could see it well.

At that point, King Artù, the King of Norgales, Sir Lancilotto, and twelve great barons went to the foreign ladies' stand where Queen Isotta was, and with Sir Tristano's permission had her come down and then led her to the castle. Inside the palace, Queen Ginevara embraced her and kissed her warmly. Thus they stood talking for a time, then went to rest on two rich seats of beautiful ivory and fine crystal. Soon Sir Tristano came into the palace, and when they had eaten they went to rest in a room; that is, King Artù and Tristano slept in one, and Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara in another.

XCIX.

The next day was bright and clear, and King Artù summoned King Amoroldo and the King of Scozia and all the other kings and queens and ladies and maidens of great family. When all the people were gathered inside the palace the tables were brought and they sat down to eat in this way: King Artù and King Amoroldo were at the head of the table, then beside them Lancilotto and Tristano, and after them all the other kings and knights errant and foreign knights of noble birth. Before them at another table sat Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara, and with them all the other queens, and ladies born of kings, 930 in number. The knights were 925, not counting the other ladies and knights who ate in the castle and on the meadow outside: these were without number.

When all the people had eaten, Sir Ivano got to his feet, saying to the barons, "In this scroll I have written the decision given by Sir Ansalerino on the outcome of the tournament, and it says this: in the first assembly of new-made knights, the victor is Sir Lionello, nephew of King Bando; in the second, it is Sir Palamidesso. In the third, Sir Tristano, in the service of the foreign knights, took the honors. In the fourth, Sir Tristano won for the honor and praise of Queen Isotta. In the fifth and final battle Tristano took the honors in the service and pleasure of the knights errant. Thus Sir Tristano can confer victory or loss as he chooses."

After Sir Ivano read the decision of the tournament, it was announced at once throughout the field. Then began the sound of instruments, singing, and play at arms that lasted five days. Afterwards, every king, count, knight, and baron returned to his own country.

And King Artù swore never to call another tournament where any weapon of offense except the lance would be used, because this one would have been the biggest and the most beautiful that had ever been held in Grande Brettagna if so many people had not been killed. The dead numbered more than 770 knights.

And King Amoroldo and the King of Scozia and all the other foreign kings swore never again to enter a tournament in which Tristano might bear arms, because he could make the winner the loser and the loser the winner at his pleasure.

Then Queen Isotta took leave of Queen Ginevara with many tears, and to seal their great love they exchanged crowns and mantles, each with the other. King Artù presented Isotta with the castle at Verzeppe, with all the meadowland where the tournament was held, saying to her, "Since this tournament was held because of you, and for love of you Tristano took the honors of it, then for love of him I give you the castle and the lands around it."

Queen Isotta thanked him graciously, then she, Tristano, Palamidesso, Dinadano, and all their company returned to Gioiosa Guardia. The king, remaining behind, ordered four images to be set up in the meadow before the castle, statues of metal to represent the four knights errant, that is Sir Tristano, Lancilotto, Palamidesso, and King Amoroldo. Here in the future there would also be a statue of Sir Galasso. Each one resembled closely the knight for whom it was made.

Know that the figure of Sir Tristano held in its hand the standard of victory, and under its feet were carved letters which told of the prowess he had shown in this assembly. And know that after the destruction of the Tavola Ritonda the five swords of the five knights were hung from their images. Then, after a while, when the good king Carlo Magno created the court of the twelve peers in Francia (that is, in Gaules), he rode into the kingdom of Longres. Passing by the castle of Verzeppe, he saw the five images of the five knights.

Inspecting their shape and their size, he decreed that King Artù had deserved his dolorous death since, having under his lordship and power five such barons, he ought to have had under his rule all Christendom and the Saracens as well. He praised the beauty and quality of Tristano's image above all the others, and inspecting the five swords found Tristano's bigger and heavier and better tempered than any of the others. Because of its weight, no knight after Carlo Magno could use it, except the Danish knight Ugieri.

And these were the deeds of giants. The greatest regret Carlo Magno had was that the sword was not at its best, because it had been blunted. No one was able to sharpen it because no wheel would bear its weight, and it could not be put in a fire for fear of ruining its fine temper. So he used it blunted thus, and for that reason it was called Cortana (short one).

Carlo Magno took Galasso's sword and called it Gioiosa, the virtuous sword. It had been made originally before the time of the wise Salamone, and had belonged earlier to Saint Giuseppe of Bramanzia, and had been called the sword Istragies Ragies. The Marquis Ulivieri had Lancilotto's sword, and he called it Altaclara, that is, the beautiful sword. That of King Amoroldo was taken by Rinaldo of Monte Albano and was called Fulberta, that is, the well-sharpened sword, and Ildusnamo of Baviera had that of Palamidesso.

Now the tale stops speaking of Carlo Magno and his people. We will return to Lancilotto, and tell how out of great ignorance he became the enemy of Sir Tristano and assailed high Gioiosa Guardia. It was to follow the book exactly that I wrote about the swords, but I don't know if it is true. The story says so.

C.

The story is, my lords, that when King Artù and Queen Ginevara and all the knights errant had returned to the city of Camellotto, they had not been there long when Sir Lancilotto set out adventuring to seek news of his son, who had been born to the daughter of King Peles Peschaor. As Lancilotto was thus riding he arrived at Dusbergo, the court of Duke Arigie. There he encountered his mortal enemy, who was called Brunoro the Brown, or rather the Black; that is, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat.

When the two knights met, they did not greet each other, but rather gave each other cruel and hateful looks, and after a little they began to reproach each other strongly. Brunoro said that Lancilotto had treacherously killed Daniello, his brother, and Lancilotto answered that he had never been a traitor, but that the greatest treachery had been practiced by the king of Orbellanda, who was Brunoro's ancestor. As they were insulting each other in this manner, they agreed to fight in ten days before the duke. They exchanged gloves on it, and agreed that whoever might lose the battle would without further reprisal lose his life.

Then Brunoro departed and rode to Gioiosa Guardia. When Tristano saw him, he honored him greatly, and Brunoro said, "Sir Tristano, I ask of you for courtesy's sake to lend me your arms and your pennons and sword and horse, for I must fight a battle at Dusbergo before Duke Arigie against a foreign knight for love of a lady. Therefore I would use your arms, for they are better tried than mine."

Tristano, who loved him very much for Dinadano's sake, loaned him the arms, but he loaned him his sword very unwillingly. Thus equipped, then, Brunoro returned to Dusbergo, and when he was just outside in the meadow, he sent word to Lancilotto to come and fight. Lancilotto armed himself at once, mounted, and rode onto the field accompanied by the duke and a number of other barons. But when Lancilotto saw the knight and saw his armor, and recognized the sword, the horse, and the hauberk, he thought truly that this was Tristano, and that he had taken Brunoro's quarrel upon himself. At that, he was very unhappy, for he believed he would be killed; still he said nothing, for he did not want to be held cowardly or low.

Then, with angry hearts, each one rode apart from other, and in great fury they met. When the meeting came, they gave each other such great blows that their lances shattered, then they finished the course.

They drew their swords and began to deal heavy strokes, so that in the first assault each one of them was badly wounded, and after the second, a large part of their armor lay scattered on the ground. The duke, seeing that the battle was so perilous, came between them and with great difficulty

forced them apart. Each one fought vigorously, for Brunoro fought with great valor, like one who has help, or is wearing arms with a vigor of their own, and he did Lancilotto much harm.

And truly Lancilotto was not fighting at the top of his powers, for he believed this to be Tristano. After the battle was stopped, the news ran through all the country that Lancilotto and Tristano had been fighting to the death, and how for the duke's sake they had stopped before they killed each other. Because of this, King Artù, Queen Ginevara, and all the kinsmen of King Bando were very sad.

Know that Brunoro was very much at fault in this, and he did it for his own advantage, for while he fought with Lancilotto, Lancilotto had said one time, "Tristano, Tristano, you have done ill to exchange Lancilotto for Brunoro." At that time, Brunoro did not answer, but remained silent and said nothing, almost as if it suited him to be mistaken for Tristano. Afterwards, Brunoro returned to Gioiosa Guardia, giving back the arms to Tristano, saying that he had fought against a foreign knight.

When Lancilotto got back to Camellotto, King Artù and the queen and all his kinsmen asked if what they had heard was the truth, that Sir Tristano had taken the field for Sir Brunoro in mortal combat against him, and Lancilotto said that it was so.

Then the queen said, "Alas, Lord God, what happened to the great service and great love you bore each other?"

"It has come to this," said Lancilotto, "and to him truly the guilt belongs. But, by my faith, it will cost him dear if I have anything to say about it. About that, you will soon hear great news."

The queen spoke to him, saying, "Lancilotto, I would be pleased for your honor to be vindicated, but I warn you many times not to enter into battle with Tristano; indeed, I pray you not to, unless you be well attended, for you know very well what kind of man Tristano is when he gets angry."

At that they ended their conversation, and Lancilotto returned to his palace. He sent for Sir Briobris, Sir Bordo, and Sir Astore di Mare, and planned with them how to take vengeance on Tristano and put him to death. And Tristano took no precautions against them, for he knew nothing about it, and he still loved Lancilotto with a good heart and a loyal love, as he had always loved him.

CI.

The masters of the story next tell that when they met on the appointed day, the four knights, that is, Lancilotto, Bordo, Astore, and Briobris, armed themselves to great advantage and provided themselves with a newly devised insignia, so as not to be recognized. It had a yellow field crossed diagonally by a vermilion band. They mounted and rode until they came to Gioiosa Guardia, near the Foresta Spinoza, where Tristano was accustomed to hunt. As they waited there, two vavasors of Gioiosa Guardia passed by. Then Astore captured them and stripped them naked except for their pants, then sent them back saying he had done this for scorn of Tristano the traitor—"and if he has anything to say about it tell him to come avenge himself. We will await him here at the forest's edge."

Then the vavasors went before Tristano all naked and told him what had been done to them for his despite and shame. When he heard of the affair, Tristano was so unhappy that he wanted to die. He ran at once to arm himself, as did Palamidesso, Brunoro, and Dinadano, but Tristano got ready sooner than they did, and rode at once to where the four knights waited.

When Lancilotto and his companions saw Tristano coming, they rode to attack him immediately. Each one hit him vigorously with a lance, one after the other, but Tristano defended himself bravely, wounding Lancilotto in the arm, and knocking Briobris off his horse, wounded underneath his shield.

At that, he was joined by Palamidesso, Brunoro, and Dinadano. Then Lancilotto and his companions rode apart, lowering their lances; that is, Lancilotto and Tristano rode together, giving each other two such great blows that both of them landed on the ground, and their horses as well. Afterwards, Bordo beat Dinadano, Brunoro defeated Astore di Mare, and Palamidesso and Briobris each broke his lance. Then all eight knights drew their swords and began a cruel and terrible battle, exchanging the cruelest of blows.

Tristano fought only with Lancilotto, finding him so fierce and so strong he marvelled greatly at it. He wondered who the four knights could be, and where they were from, because he had never seen their insignia before.

The battle they fought was very, very dangerous, because Lancilotto would rather die than let Tristano live, but Tristano did not know who he was fighting or why. Still he fought boldly always, though he did not do all he might because he wanted to save his strength; for that reason the battle grew always worse.

After a while, here came the two viceroys of Gioiosa Guardia, that is, Sir Gulistante and Sir Lantris, fearing that Sir Tristano might be too much

encumbered. They came out of the castle with more than sixty armed knights, to bring him aid and succor.

When Tristano saw them riding that way, so upset, he went to meet them, saying, "Gulistante, and you, Lantris, I command you on pain of your heads not to give me any help if you see me cut to pieces by one knight or two, even by twenty!"

Then they drew back and stayed to watch the battle between the eight knights, whose armor was all slashed to bits; all were wounded in some part, except for Dinadano the Bold, who held back gladly on any excuse. It seemed he took more delight in watching than in fighting.

As Lancilotto and Tristano were fighting thus, and Sir Gulistante was watching the battle, he recognized Astore di Mare, then quietly drew near him and began to say, "Eh, Astore, what are you doing? Why are you against Sir Tristano, who is such a loyal friend to Sir Lancilotto?"

Astore replied. "Knight, don't press me, for you can well see over there that it is Sir Lancilotto who fights with Sir Tristano."

Sir Gulistante, hearing those words, became very sad and ran to that side, saying, "Stop fighting, knights, you are making a terrible mistake! Eh, eh, Tristano, can't you see that this is Lancilotto you are fighting?"

Tristano, hearing this, was greatly saddened and at once dropped sword and shield on the ground and tried to embrace Lancilotto, but Lancilotto would not let him, saying, "Tristano, Tristano, now you act very friendly, but you made me see you otherwise at Dusbergo, before the Duke Arigie, for Brunoro's sake."

Tristano, marvelling greatly at those words, said, "What, Lancilotto? What words are these you are saying? What words are these? I know well I have never been to Dusbergo before the duke, and I don't know what you are talking about. Not for Brunoro or any other have I ever done anything against you!"

Lancilotto said to him, "Tristano, Tristano, don't you think I know your horse and your sword?"

Tristano thought a little, and remembering, said, "Lancilotto, it is true that I loaned my horse and sword to Brunoro, who told me he wanted to fight against a foreign knight for love of a lady."

Then Lancilotto knew for sure that Tristano was not guilty, but that it had all been Brunoro's fault. He ran to embrace him, asking pardon and admitting his guilt, and told his brothers in arms about the great misunderstanding that had come between them. And for love of Tristano, Lancilotto pardoned Brunoro and made peace with Dinadano. They went together into Gioiosa Guardia, where Isotta honored them greatly and treated their wounds. At once the tables were brought out, and water for their hands, and they sat down to eat.

As they were eating, Palamidesso, to start a conversation with Dinadano,

said, "Queen Isotta, by my faith, I thought I might never return to this palace, for we would all have been killed if it had not been for the great prowess and good advice of Sir Dinadano, who stayed to oversee our battle."

"Now, you are a know-it-all, Palamidesso," said Dinadano, "because you had yourself baptized and have adopted our faith.[28] But we don't feel any gratitude toward you for that, since you did it for your own advantage—the pagans had no desire to count you among their number any more. And truly, it will be nothing to the Christians if you regret it: I don't know why you don't just turn your cloak again."

"Eh, by my faith," said Tristano, "he has never been hated by Christians, for I and all the knights errant love him."

"It doesn't matter if you love him," said Dinadano to Tristano; "You love for your own advantage, since he defended you against Lancilotto. But wait a little, the time will come when the mouse will gnaw the purse, as happened before, when he stole Queen Isotta away."

At such words Brunoro became very worried, for fear they would anger Tristano, so he said then to Dinadano, "You are too arrogant with words and evil language, and evil will come of it."

Dinadano replied, "If I use arrogant words, it is still only language. You are arrogant in deed, when you go wearing the armor of another, because you want to be thought bold. Was your horse not shod that you wanted Tristano's?"

And Lancilotto said, "Enough of this. It is discourteous to remember that now."

"You have no room to talk, Lancilotto," replied Dinadano, "For you go attacking others with your insignia disguised so you will not be recognized, and make peace or war at your whim and pleasure. But you made peace for yourself rather than for any other knight, because you would have been beaten already if only the yellow field with its band of vermilion had been seen."

Then Bordo said, "You speak the truth, Dinadano, by right of your great prowess. You fought so vigorously."

"I won't answer you," said Dinadano, "for you say you are chaste, and thereby you wrong God and the world. I still warn Tristano against entrusting Queen Isotta to you. You say you are chaste; nonetheless, you are not a eunuch."

At those words Astore and Briobris laughed heartily, because it was the truth. Then Dinadano said, "You, Astore, and you, Briobris, were made to laugh another kind of laugh by something else from Breus, when you were with Sir Arecco and Sir Prezzivale, near the fountain at the meadow."

At that point, all the knights were quiet, and no one was brave enough to dare a word for fear of Dinadano's rebuking; but they laughed heartily among themselves. Then Queen Isotta said, "Oh, Dinadano does well. He

can silence any knight who tries to insult him."

"What do you know about it, lady?" asked Dinadano. "Being quiet and sitting at ease in your room. You don't come out except to laugh and make fun of others, and inquire who has won and who has lost. Woe to the one who has to receive the blows from it."

Thus they exchanged insults, and the knights took great delight in it. But soon they all left the tables except Dinadano, who stayed there eating and chewing hungrily, saying, "This is one advantage that Tristano will not have over me, to say I did not eat my share."

They lingered there in this way for twelve days, then after that all eight knights, that is, Tristano, Lancilotto, Palamidesso, Briobris, Astore, Brunoro, Bordo, and Dinadano, set out for the city of Camellotto. When King Artù and Queen Ginevara saw them, they made a great celebration and an honorable reception. All the people were happy to see Tristano and Lancilotto and to find out that the news of their discord was not true, but had been a mistake, and Sir Brunoro's fault.

Now the tale leaves the eight knights, and we will speak of the great enmity, with a great battle, between Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto on the plain of Bucifalaso, before the castle of Lerlinte.

CII.

The true story tells that the enemy of the human race who, because of his pride, was cast out of heaven to earth, that is, from celestial glory to infernal punishment, that he, out of envy and through his subtle operations, saw to it that the peace between Tristano and Lancilotto lasted only a short time. Thus there occurred between them the greatest and most mortal battle that ever was between two knights. This happened because a few people, moved by envy, told Tristano that Lancilotto had been boasting how he had attacked Gioiosa Guardia, and how he had had the best of the battle, and how only for the honor of chivalry had he stopped before putting Tristano to death. These false, made-up words came only from Sir Calvano, and he said them because he hated Sir Lancilotto very much. Lancilotto also hated him, because Calvano and his brothers had killed Sir Amorotto and Sir Adriano.

And when Tristano heard all this, he would not speak to Lancilotto, and Lancilotto, seeing Tristano so haughty, stopped speaking to him. And you

can be sure that one of Tristano's greatest desires was to prove himself against Lancilotto, to find out which of them was better able to harm the other. He went around looking for a way to prove himself against him, a way to meet him on the field in single combat.

Lancilotto was the victim in this, because he had never spoken such words, but seeing that Tristano would not speak to him, neither did he speak to Tristano; so they held each other in great disdain for a long time.

Then, in the way that war and strife arises—out of great error—there developed between Amoroldo of Irlanda and King Alois of Norgales great trouble and a great argument, so that they waged war against each other. All this was over a castle on the plain of Bucifalaso, on the border of Irlanda and Norgales. Each king believed that he had the right to it, and each one wanted it under his rule. The people of the castle had up to then obeyed King Amoroldo, but now the King of Norgales had occupied it, and put there some men of his household.

King Amoroldo had come to retake it, and King Alois to defend it. Each of the kings had pitched camp near the castle, and each had sent out to summon his allies. King Alois sent for Lancilotto without delay, so that he would come to help. As soon as he had the letter, Lancilotto gathered 480 knights, among whom were Sir Brunoro the White, Sir Astore di Mare, Sir Briobris, Bordo, Lionello, and the rest of his kinsmen.

King Amoroldo sent urgent summons to Sir Tristano and his friends. When Tristano received the message, he was very glad, only because he would be fighting against Sir Lancilotto. He did not want to take a greater number of knights than Lancilotto had taken with him, but among these were Sir Palamidesso, Prezzivale, Sir Brunoro the Black, Dinadano, Dodinello, Sagris son of the King of Agalone, Sir Arreco, Sir Lac, the brother of Sir Ivano, and all three sons of King Allielle, and many other brave knights.

When Tristano came to the field where King Amoroldo was encamped, they greeted each other very honorably, and Tristano then had his camp pitched nearer the castle. In this manner the two armies camped on one side and the other of the plain of Bucifalaso, before the castle of Lerlinte.

Then the King of Norgales sent Sir Briobris and two other knights to King Amoroldo, summoning him to battle. When the three knights came before the king, they greeted him courteously, saying, "King Amoroldo, King Alois has sent us to tell you that in the morning he will be on the field with his bands of knights, and that of two things you should choose one: either join in battle, or leave the field."

Then Tristano, with the assent of King Amoroldo, got to his feet and said to them, "My lords, King Amoroldo answers in this way: in the morning he and his horsemen will be on the field and past the middle of it. And let Lancilotto know that he will find on the field the son of King Meliadus. Tell him I have come here for no other reason than to prove myself against

him because of the way he has boasted of assaulting me at Gioiosa Guardia, saying that if I had not made great excuses to him, he would have killed me. Truly, of that coming of his I knew nothing, but I will make mine well known to him."

Then the three knights returned with their messages, and told King Alois and Lancilotto what had happened. Lancilotto held their news in great disdain, saying he would gladly fight until one of them was dead.

The battle thus arranged, each side busied itself with great preparation of arms. When the next day came, each king summoned his troops, and they were all assembled for review at once. The trumpets sounded on each side, and every knight threw himself into the fray. Tristano and his people attacked Sir Lancilotto's troops and began to deal out great blows. Here there was much splintering of lances and striking of horses and unhorsing of knights, and many good destriers were seen with empty saddles. When lances broke, good swords were unsheathed, and the cries of the knights, the clash of iron against iron, and the raging of horses was so great it seemed like the end of the world. Whoever saw knights spilled, and severed heads, hands, feet, and legs lying over the ground, along with many dead knights, would have said never before had anyone seen a crueler battle.

Tristano and Lancilotto drew somewhat apart from the other knights; then they began the cruelest of battles openly between themselves. Here no one could say they did not recognize each other, nor were they playing, for one would gladly kill the other; here the final decision on their prowess would be made. All the other troops dropped back out of exhaustion, and only Tristano and Lancilotto fought on the field. Not for anything would they take respite.

When their lances broke, before either had bent the other over the saddlebow, they took their iron maces in hand and gave each other such great blows that their helmets rang on their heads, and their shields broke on their arms, their flesh was bruised and their bones broken.

After this, they grasped their swords and struck at each other so vigorously that in a short time their hauberks were all smashed and their exposed flesh was livid with blood and sweat. They no longer had shields on their arms, but each one would rather die than be the loser. Constantly they said to each other, "You are Tristano and I am Lancilotto. Now we will find out for sure which one of us is the better knight!"

And each of them swore that if he lost he would never again bear arms. For all that, they were very, very tired and exhausted, but each one was afraid to ask for a rest.

And Tristano said, "Lancilotto, here is Tristano, who has attacked you neither privately nor secretly, as you did me at Gioiosa Guardia. I have not changed my insignia to keep you from recognizing me. Now defend yourself well, as best you can. By my faith, I will kill you, you may be sure!"

"Tristano, Tristano, you see here the son of King Bando, who cares little for your threats. Surely I will make your great pride cost you dear, for in no way could you resemble my kinsmen."

To this Tristano replied, "Lancilotto, Lancilotto, we haven't come here to defile our tongues with slander, or to vaunt ourselves. I am the son of King Meliadus, the most courteous king in the world, and of the highest and most gentle family; but the boast of the mouth is worth little. A good heart, a strong arm, and a sharp sword will settle our dispute."

And then they gave each other such great blows it was a marvel, and impossible to watch, and they still fought with great vigor. Know that they both were wounded in some part, and the ground was stained with their blood, and their horses could no longer stand. As they fought on, Lancilotto wanted very much to rest, but Tristano would not agree to it. He wanted to finish the fight in that assault, that is, in the first. It was the second, however, which would show the better fighter.

Tristano said to Lancilotto, "We are in battle; defend yourself well. You may be sure that the end of the fight will come soon. I want our encounter to end thus: that in this first hour it will show which of us is the boldest and best able to harm the other."

Lancilotto, who was very tired and could hardly defend himself against Tristano, replied, "Truly, you are not warlike, but rather proud and crazy, and you are no courteous knight, when I ask for a rest, if you do not grant it to me. I protest: you should do no more to me until I have rested."

Tristano answered, "Lancilotto, the man of war is not crazy, but rather has an ardor which comes from the heart. Therefore defend yourself boldly, for I challenge you!"

And he struck him with new energy, and brought him to such a pass that it was all Lancilotto could do to defend himself. Lancilotto thought it certain he would have died had it not been for Sir Astore and Sir Briobris, Sir Bordo, Sir Brunoro, and Sir Lionello. They, seeing that Lancilotto was exhausted and that Tristano would not let him rest, and knowing that if the battle lasted much longer Tristano would kill him, were very worried and had great fear of losing him. Therefore they all left their own frays and came to help Lancilotto against Tristano.

Tristano defended himself bravely against them, and acted with great boldness and vigor of heart, responding to all who attacked him, striking out with his good sword. As for them, they were all trying to kill him. Soon Palamidesso, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat, Prezzivale, Sagris, and Gariette, who were on the side against Lancilotto, began a cruel battle against the others.

Tristano, seeing the five knights who had come to his aid, spoke great and arrogant words which showed his boldness of heart: "Ah, knights, what business is it of yours to come in such a hurry? Know that your coming

will take the honor and prize of the battle away from me."

He said this because when he had seen the five knights who came against him he had comforted himself in his heart, and had found new strength to strike even more strongly, so that he thought he would scatter them all. He had told himself this: "Better one proud knight alone than six knights, some bold and some cowardly."

The knights fought thus until almost all of them were wounded and until the daylight failed them. Then the King of Norgales and King Amoroldo sent word that each knight should retire to his own pavilion, and on both sides they returned to their camps.

When the next day came they buried their dead and found that on the King of Norgales' side 270 knights had died, and on King Amoroldo's side, 216. At that, the King of Norgales, who was clever and wise, thought to himself, "These facts don't argue well for me, for if I fight in open combat I will lose, because Tristano alone will rout my forces, so great is his prowess. Therefore I will engage in single combat with King Amoroldo, even though he is worthier than I. Still it will be I alone who wins or loses."

Then he sent two knights to deliver the message written below:

CIII.

My lord, King Alois has sent us to say that too much damage will occur in the fighting of people against people. Therefore, if it pleases and delights you, he alone wishes to fight you alone, so that whichever of you wins will remain as lord of the castle, while the loser will then go on his way and take care of other needs."

At that, Sir Tristano got to his feet saying to them, "My lords, as you see, King Amoroldo is wounded in two places: in the face, and in the arm. Thus he cannot at present take on a battle of this sort, on which the honor of the country and the glory of chivalry rests; he is far too badly wounded. But he will send to the field one knight to be his champion and defend his cause, and I will be that knight.

"Not that I think King Alois wants to fight with me, but I am sure that he will select Lancilotto as his best knight, and thus we will decide two questions. If I lose, King Amoroldo will drop his claim to the castle, and Sir Lancilotto will have proved the vaunt he made against me when he said that he had done me great harm before Gioiosa Guardia. And if Lancilotto loses,

his boast will not be true that he had advantage over me, and the King of Norgales will surrender the castle to King Amoroldo."

At that, the two messengers returned to their lord and reported on their embassy, and Lancilotto was very sorry about it. Then King Alois and Lancilotto, with some twenty knights, mounted their horses all unarmed and went at a walk to speak with King Amoroldo. Then the two kings spoke together and arranged that the combat take place between their two champions.

Then Lancilotto came forward, saying, "Sir Tristano, you have sent to say that you want to fight with me, and you seem to be my opponent in everything. Therefore I would gladly know from you if this is true."

And Tristano said, "Lancilotto, it is very true. There is nothing in this world I want so much as to fight with you."

"Tristano, Tristano," said Lancilotto, "I have served you always and honored you until this day. But from now on I hold you as my mortal enemy and I am well pleased that this battle is to be between only you and me."

Then Tristano was not slow to respond, but stepped forward pulling off his ermine glove and giving it to Lancilotto, so that their battle might be assured. The encounter was set for ten days hence; they could not fight before then, they were so badly wounded from their first encounter. Then they returned to their pavilions.

Sir Astore and Sir Lionello were very sorry that this battle had to be, for love of Tristano, and for fear that Lancilotto could not match him, and also for love of chivalry; they thought much about how they might prevent the fight. Then they sent for a wise squire, one in whom they trusted greatly. They sent him quickly to King Artù, to tell him what was happening. At once the squire took a swift and ready palfrey, and rode day and night so that he came to Camellotto. Coming before King Artù, he knelt and delivered his letter. At once the king opened it, to find out what it said. The letter contained this message:

CIV.

To the noble and powerful king of Longres and Brettagna, lord of all countries and provinces, maintainer of chivalry, my lord King Artù, sum of power, nobility, and wisdom, crowned with virtue and benignity, mercy and pity, we greet you and kneel down to you. Let it be known that on the plain of Bucifalaso, before the Castle of Lerlinte ten days from now will occur the destruction of all chivalry. There has been a great battle between Tristano and Lancilotto that almost caused their deaths: their hearts are so hardened that they want to fight to the death. The glove has been given on this, so that nothing can stop it short of your great decree."

When the king had read the letter and heard the messenger, he told the queen and many barons who were there, who were very sorrowful at the news. Then the king commanded his son Mordarette and Sir Ivano to mount 300 soldiers and go quickly to the plain of Bucifalaso, and thus it was done. When this embassy came to the camp before the two kings, Sir Ivano dismounted, saying to them, "My lords, we have not come here without great good reason, we who are viceroys of the high king, Artù: here is the sealed letter confirming it. Therefore we command that you, King of Norgales, and you King Amoroldo, and you Tristano, and you Lancilotto, on pain of being named and held traitors to the high throne, leave here at once, and within six days be at Camellotto, there to defend and prove your rights to the Castle of Lerlinte."

When the kings and the knights heard the high command, some were glad of it and some were sorry. Lancilotto was glad, only because now he would not have to enter the field against Tristano, for he had been uncertain of the outcome; and all the knights of his family were also pleased. Tristano was sorry because now he could not disprove the boast Lancilotto had been said to have made against him. The King of Norgales left the castle to King Artù's people, then everyone made their way to the city of Camellotto.

King Artù, when he saw that Tristano and Lancilotto would not speak to each other, was the saddest king in the world. Then he said to Tristano, "I ask a boon of you."

And Tristano replied, "My lord, ask anything you please."

The king said, "I want you to send for Queen Isotta to come for a visit to Queen Ginevara."

Tristano said he would do it; then he sent Sir Prezzivale and Sir Dinadano to her, with 400 noble knights, and he sent his ring as a sign. The knights rode until they reached Gioiosa Guardia, where the queen met them with great honor. When she saw the ring she gave commands, prepared herself,

then mounted and rode back with them to Camellotto. When they were still two leagues outside the city, Queen Ginevara, King Artù, and other ladies, barons, and knights met them, and from the other side came Sir Lancilotto and all his kinsmen.

Lancilotto greeted the queen with much honor, and had her ride in a litter, all painted and decorated, borne by four rich and large palfreys. High over her head was a costly and noble silken canopy carried by four knights: Sir Astore di Mare, Sir Briobris, Sir Brunoro, and Sir Lionello. Beside her rode King Artù and Lancilotto, telling her of the great enmity which had grown between Lancilotto and Sir Tristano, and Lancilotto excused himself, saying how he had never in word or deed meant any offense.

Then King Artù and Queen Ginevara begged Queen Isotta to influence Tristano so that there might be peace and love between him and Lancilotto.

At the palace, the queen dismounted. Lancilotto handed her down and led her into the great hall, where all the ladies of the country were assembled to show their great joy in Queen Isotta. When they had rested, the two queens took Sir Tristano by the hand and had him sit between them, and begged him to give them pleasure by making a sure and good peace between himself and Lancilotto.

Tristano, hearing the prayers of the two queens, and hearing how Lancilotto swore he had never said those words, and also for love of King Artù and of chivalry, made peace with his friend, and all the court was very happy about it.

Then Tristano and Lancilotto decided to set out on an adventure in the countryside nearby. Tristano left Isotta in the care of King Artù and Queen Ginevara, saying they believed they would soon return. Then they mounted their horses and set out.

CV.

The two noble knights rode on all that day, but met with no adventure. Then they rode a second, a third, and a fourth day, so that on the fifth they found themselves at the head of the Valle Bruna, near the foot of a high mountain. At the crest of it was a mighty fortress called Rocca Forte. As they rode in that direction they encountered an ancient knight who was more than 170 years old, very big and strongly made. When this knight saw the two companions he saluted them courteously, and asked them who they were.

Lancilotto said to him, "We are knights errant, of the household of my lord King Artù."

Then the old knight asked them to his castle, saying, "My lords, come and rest, for I am a man who loves knight errantry very much, I used to be a knight of the Tavola Vecchia, and I am called Sigurans the Brown."

When Tristano heard that this was Sir Sigurans, the knight from Agragone, the greatest fighter King Uter Pandragone had had in his court, he felt very glad. Then he came forward: "Sir," he said, "I ask you in courtesy please to joust one time with me, for I would gladly put your prowess to the test."

"By my faith," said the old knight, "I marvel greatly at these words, because I did not believe there was a knight of the Tavola who had not already tried me. But tell me your name, and I will satisfy your request."

Then the two knights told him their names, and when Sir Sigurans heard that this was young Tristano, whose fame was so great throughout the world, he said, "Knight, I tell you, you don't have half the desire to joust with me that I have to joust with you. I want to see if you are half as good as your father King Meliadus was. I have already tested Lancilotto many, many times."

Then he had his armor brought from the castle, armed himself, mounted, and rode out on the field. They came against each other as only their good horses knew how to go, and at their encounter exchanged two blows so great that both lances shattered in pieces. The knights struck each other on chestplates and faceguards with such great force that both of them went to the ground with their horses, and Sir Sigurans' horse was killed outright. Both knights lay stunned for a good while—almost an hour.

Tristano was the first to recover. He took Sir Sigurans by the hand to help him up, saying, "Knight, how do you feel?" Sigurans swore that never in his life had he received such a great blow, and Tristano said neither had he.

After the old knight had rested a little, he asked Tristano to lend him his horse, so that he might try a pass with Lancilotto, and Tristano loaned it to him. Then Sir Sigurans mounted and rode against Sir Lancilotto, and they exchanged two great blows; but Sigurans defeated Lancilotto, then returned the horse to Tristano, warmly inviting them to come and rest at his castle. Lancilotto would not accept the invitation, though, because he was a little bit ashamed.

So they took leave and rode until they came to an abbey and a monastery. Here they rested, and here Lancilotto was treated for the wound which had been given him by Sigurans the Brown.

Every day Tristano sought adventure in the countryside around, and at evening came back to the abbey. On the third day that he rode out, he rode so far that he was nine leagues away from the abbey. At that moment, he encountered a lady on the road, one who rode very nobly, attended by thirty damsels. It was the Dama del Lago, who was returning from a visit

to the high prince Galeotto, and going to her own country, to the Castello del Lago.

When she met Tristano, and saw that he was all alone, she asked him who he was, and Tristano told her. When she understood that this was Tristano, whom she had wanted to see for a long time, she was very glad. She asked about Lancilotto, and Tristano told her that he was staying at the abbey, and was slightly wounded.

Then the lady thought a little, and thought of all that might happen. At once she had a pavilion raised, and so worked with her magic that she made it seem to be a beautiful palace; then she commanded two of her damsels to do as you will soon hear.

For, as Tristano and the lady were talking, two damsels appeared right in front of them before Tristano noticed them or could see where they came from. When the two were before the Dama del Lago and Tristano, who were speaking together as they rode, one took Tristano's horse by the bridle, and the other took the lady's, saying, "My lord and my lady, when it suits you, we invite you into this palace. Here you can rest and refresh youself; then you can go on your way."

"Damsels," said Tristano, "I have no need for rest just now."

But the damsels replied, "Sir knight, for courtesy's sake, don't be so ungrateful. We pray you not to refuse the good custom and usage of the palace, for we take oath that since it was built no knight ever passed who did not rest a little and drink something, for in the valley you see before you there is no villa or habitation for more than ten leagues, no place where a man might rest and refresh himself."

The Dama del Lago pressed Tristano to accept the invitation, and Tristano said he would do it gladly, for he was no knight to break a good custom. They rode in that direction, and when they dismounted were led into a large, beautiful garden which seemed to have a high wall all around. The damsels brought them drinks and confections there. When they had drunk, they found themselves locked up in the garden, off which there appeared to be beautiful rooms. Then the lady revealed herself to Tristano, saying, "Tristano, you will never leave here until I have within Isotta, Lancilotto, and Queen Ginevara, because quickly I intend to have them here."

Then the lady sent for her servants and had them bring bread and wine and other food in great abundance, and other things to give delight. Tristano, locked up this way, felt very sad, but there was nothing he could do about it.

By magic the Dama del Lago made a dead body which looked as if it were Tristano's, and dressed it with Tristano's insignia. It was all bloody, wounded in three places, and she had it put in the middle of the roadway, and had a shield put with it, and shattered lances, as if he had died fighting many knights. And then she had a horse put near the body that seemed much like Tristano's, but Tristano himself knew nothing about this.

Lancilotto, staying at the abbey, expected Tristano to return in the eve-

ning as he always did. When he saw that Tristano did not come back he was very sad about it, sighing often, and unable to find rest or repose. All that night he could do nothing but wonder what had happened, saying to himself, "Of two things, it will be one. Either Tristano has had an accident, or he has gone adventuring through other countries."

In the morning at tierce the abbot came in and Lancilotto, along with the monks, went to the tables to eat, when there arrived a damsel disguised as a squire who told the abbot that ten leagues from there she had found a dead knight. "Surely the handsomest and best made of all I have seen. His armor is all broken, and a good horse stands nearby."

Sir Lancilotto, already very apprehensive, on hearing these words became miserable. He got up from the table at once and walked to and fro in the hall, unable to rest, sighing and making a great lament, "Alas, alas, my dear companion, my faithful Tristano, my dear friend! What new anguish is this? Oh, prowess and courtesy of the world, why have you abandoned me? Oh, true honor and praise of chivalry, why have you died in this way? Oh, falcon and guardian of knights errant, where will I ever find you?"

Surely Lancilotto made the greatest lament and complaint in the world, even though he was still not certain. But after a little, one of the abbot's shepherds returned, and when he saw Lancilotto, he said, "Sir knight, I bring you very sad and bitter news, for I saw the knight who came with you as your companion dead and lying in the road. I saw him yesterday, and he was wounded in many places. He is in the middle of the road in the valley called Basingnana, and I knew it was truly he lying there because I recognized his standard and the good horse that was near him."

Lancilotto, hearing this, said, "Alas, what dolorous news is this?" Then he fainted from grief, and was a long time coming back to consciousness. When he did recover, he armed himself and mounted without further delay, and so rode that he came to the place the shepherd had described to him. He rode straight down the road, and saw the body, and Tristano's horse.

When Lancilotto saw him, he threw himself to the ground, embracing and kissing the corpse for a long time. Then he searched its wounds, making the greatest lament and the greatest complaint in the world, the greatest ever made for any knight, saying: "Oh, woe is me! Tristano, so full of noble courtesy and prowess, surely all the people will say that I have killed you out of envy! Alas, unhappy me! My heart is so grieved for you! For truly you were the worth, virtue, and happiness of the Tavola Ritonda. Alas, good Lord God, send me some counsel in your pity and mercy, so that I may find out who did this great wrong! For surely you were killed through a great treachery. It could have happened in no other way, for if you had not been killed by deceit, whoever came against you would have been made very sad and sorry for his act."

Then Lancilotto made the greatest lament in the world, and swore he would stay in that neighborhood two months and put to death as many knights

and people as he could find, whomever he met, or die himself. As Lancilotto was thus grieving, two damsels approached him and tried to comfort him, begging him to take some counsel in his heavy sorrow, and asking him to come and rest at their palace nearby. "For there you can find out some news about how this knight died. We will not abandon the body until you return."

Then Lancilotto, who was glad to seek out news about how Tristano had been killed, left the damsels at once and rode to the palace. When he came inside he saw the Dama del Lago, and marvelled greatly, but still he greeted her with great honor. Then the lady took him by the hand and said, "Be comforted, knight," and led him to where Sir Tristano was. When they came together, they felt great joy and made great celebration; for a moment their joy was so great they could not speak.

Then Lancilotto told Tristano his most recent news, and Tristano marvelled at it, but they knew well that all this was the work of the Dama del Lago.

She said, "Knights, think of nothing beside a good time and lovely pleasure. I swear I will make you happy and joyful, and it will content me to see the thing I have wanted to see for such a long time, that is, you two together with the two queens."

Then the lady had two beds of rich silk carried into the garden, and had equipment brought for playing music, reading, fencing, and for telling the fine and noble stories of ancient times. And to give them joy she brought them twelve beautiful girls who always sang and danced and played music and made the knights happy, giving them great delight. But still, the knights knew that they could not get away.

By magic the lady made another body, dressed in Lancilotto's insignia, and made two horses, one dead and the other wounded, and put one body a little distance from the other. Then the news was spread over the countryside that Tristano and Lancilotto were dead in the great valley of Basingnana. The news scattered over the country of Longres, but no one believed it for certain. Now we will be quiet about the two knights, and tell how the news was made known in Camellotto.

CVI.

In this part the story tells how the Dama del Lago, having managed it so that she had Tristano and Lancilotto in her company, thought about how to have Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara as well. She sent two damsels to King Artù's court to take word of the deaths of the two knights. The damsels rode day after day, so that in ten days they arrived in the city of

Camellotto. They dismounted at the palace, tying their horses to the rings provided, then mounted the stairs into the great hall.

Here they found the king, the two queens, and many barons, all very troubled by the news they had had about the two knights, though they could not believe it for sure. At that point, the two damsels greeted the king and the other nobles courteously, saying, "My lords, we bring you dark and evil news. Two knights errant have been killed in the valley of Basingnana"—and here they described the knights' insignia—"and they have been terribly wounded. But who they might be we cannot say for sure."

Then the king, the two queens, and all the others became the saddest people in the world, saying, "Now we can see clearly that the news we heard before was true."

Then all through the palace there arose such a great complaining and lamenting it was as if the whole world were dead, and the two queens made such a great lament that no one had ever heard anything so pitiful.

Queen Ginevara said, "Alas, Lancilotto dearest, lovely nobleman and prowess of the world, champion of King Artù and all the knights errant! O courteous Tristano, are you dead like this, and are we nevermore to be joyful because of you?"

And Queen Isotta made a complaint so sorrowful and a lament so sincere that it made everyone who heard it weep. She said, "My lord King Artù and you other ladies, barons, and knights who hear with such sad hearts of the great pride of Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto, now weep in your hearts, and be sorrowful, and think of the high beauty given form in each of them, think of their prowess, courtesy, and nobility, ornamented with great virtue and frankness, for those who honor them will feel darkness in their hearts."

And then Queen Isotta said, "Alas, sorrow, oh, wasted nature, oh cruel death! Alas, how have you abandoned me! Oh Iesu Cristo, you created and gave us such beauty; now you have left me in great sorrow. Oh, death, sorrowful and villainous, why have you cast us down, so that we don't see what we should do? Now how can we ever find consolation anywhere?" Then she cried out in a loud voice, "Oh, Tristano, Tristano, why have you died this way? You were my delight and my pleasure, comfort and guide and light of all my well-being. For love of me you have left kingdoms and parents, and I have done the same for you. Now I have lost you, and for sorrow I will never be happy again. Oh, courteous and delightful Lancilotto, how are you dead like this? For it is against all good reason that all the prowess and nobility in the whole world should die. I do not believe that it could happen! It is my own misfortune."

Queen Isotta's lament was so great that it made all the people weep.

Then, with no further delay, King Artù and the two queens, with sixty ladies and fifty knights errant, mounted and set out in the company of the two damsels, and so rode day and night without resting until they came to the place where the two dead bodies lay. They looked at them and recog-

nized their insignia, and when they were sure who it was they began the greatest mourning in the world, tearing their clothes and rending their faces. The beautiful Isotta, trembling all over, embraced the body of Tristano her lover, kissing him everywhere, wishing she could die there with him.

In her heart and in her lament she said, "Oh, Sir Tristano, oh, my soul, I carry you in my heart, shaped as you were in the form of your own nobility. Now where are you? Where have you gone? Do you remember me now, the one you brought to life? I will surely die for you, seeing you like this!

"I pray you, oh King Artù, that you listen to what I ask of you. Tell me, tell me, sire, for God's sake, if Tristano and Lancilotto are dead, and will nevermore return to your court. For the faith and courtesy you bear to Iesu Cristo, tell me, sire, if they are alive or dead!"

And the king answered her, "My daughter, sorrow locks my heart when I hear those two remembered by name, and I will weep for them night and day, through peace and war. Sir Lancilotto is dead, and I do not know how; Sir Tristano the young knight is dead, and because of them I will never be happy again."

And Isotta said, "Alas, my lord king, thus is it true that he is dead, my hope and my delight? Let it not please God that I live any longer, or that I ever again wear mantle or fine golden crown, for my life is emptied of all happiness. Alas, Lord God, let me stay no longer in this world alive and wasting away, for too clearly I see that I am deprived of all good; I am alone, and I can find no remedy!"

At that point, the beautiful Isotta was beside herself, and for sorrow fell into a swoon. It seemed as if she were dead, for no one could find a pulse or any other sign of life, and everyone feared that she, too, had died.

Then eight damsels came out of the palace, and with the consent of all took Isotta in their arms and bore her into the palace, laying her to rest on a richly decorated bed for the great need she had of it, and Queen Ginevara went with her to keep her company.

Then the Dama del Lago, who was inside, led Queen Ginevara into the garden, and when Lancilotto saw her, together they made the greatest celebration and the greatest joy in the world. But Tristano, seeing Isotta unconscious, was so sorrowful in his heart that he almost died.

When Queen Isotta recovered herself she gave a great sigh, saying, "Oh my love, oh, heart of my body, my Tristano, where have you gone? Who has killed you? I surely do not want to live any longer!"

As she was saying this, Queen Isotta opened her eyes and saw that Tristano was here, right next to her mouth, looking like one overcome with sorrow and grief. All the time he held one of Isotta's hands in his, then both of them, stroking them always, and rubbing the pulse in her arm. On the other side of her, she saw that the Dama del Lago was doing the same to her other arm.

Then the Dama del Lago began to comfort her, telling her all that she

had done by magic to bring them together, because of the great desire she had had of seeing them. —"But for what I have done I am rather sorry, because of the unhappiness the beautiful Isotta has endured." Many times she begged her pardon, and Tristano's, and then said, "I pray that you will be comforted, and have a good time here, and so be restored for all past sorrows."

Then the two knights and the two queens did so. All day long they gave each other comfort and pleasure, and took together delight and contentment good and fine, at their leisure.

CVII.

The true story tells and recounts that when the Dama del Lago had the two queens inside the palace, she threw a powder over it that covered it by magic with a dense, dark cloud so large that King Artù and the other knights, because of the great darkness, could not even see each other. At that point, the palace vanished, and so did the two dead bodies. For those within, that is, Tristano and Lancilotto, there was no darkness, rather they remained in the pavilion in great happiness.

When the darkness passed, King Artù could no longer see the palace, the two bodies, or the two queens; at this he marvelled greatly. Then he redoubled his great lament, mourning for Tristano and Lancilotto, and Isotta the Blonde, but mostly mourning for Queen Ginevara, for he did not know where she had gone, or whether she were alive or dead. King Artù remained there for three days, but found in the valley neither villa nor castle. Then seeing that to stay longer would avail him nothing, he left with his company and in great sorrow returned to the city of Camellotto. There he made continually a great lament, as did all the ladies and barons and other knights of the city, and all the other people.

Tristano and Lancilotto stayed with the two queens in the pavilion in great solace, and continued like this for fifteen days. Afterwards, the Dama del Lago took leave of the whole party, saying they should accuse her ardently to excuse themselves: "When I have the grace of you four, I care nothing for the king and his power."

At that point, the lady had the pavilion removed, and they took leave of each other, the lady returning to her own country, and Tristano, Lancilotto, and the two queens going back to Camellotto. When they arrived at the palace, King Artù and all the people marvelled greatly, and demanded to know what had happened to them.

Then Tristano and Lancilotto said that the false Dama del Lago had given them such a potion that they could not wake up. . . . "And we thought we would sleep forever. But we well swear that if ever this false one falls into our hands we will not protect her from you, for surely you will take her and have her burnt."

The king declared that he would indeed, and decreed that she should be burned, as he had already decreed for his sister Fata Morgana. And the king, who had been so sad, was consoled because he believed they had slept without waking, as he said . . . "Better this evil than a worse one . . ." And he was almost consoled for his wretchedness because he had his queen back again. Now he guarded his wife more closely than before, so this could not happen again; but generally it was believed that because of the enchantment they had all slept the whole time.

When the beautiful Isotta had rested ten days, Tristano sent her back to Gioiosa Guardia in the company of King Amoroldo, to whom King Artù had conceded the castle of Lerlinte. Palamidesso also went with them.

Now the story stops telling about this, and we will tell how the gracious knight Sir Galasso came to the court of King Artù, and by his coming began the high quest of the Sangradale.

CVIII.

The masters of the story tell how King Peles Peschaor of Organia had one daughter, lovely to see, who was called the damsel Perevida. It happened that a person who knew the seven arts of necromancy made a prophecy to the king and queen of Organia, and told them that if their daughter made love with Sir Lancilotto she would become pregnant with the most gracious knight in the world, who would be virgin and pure, and through his virginity and his prowess, he would be able to accomplish the high quest of the Sangradale.

Then the high queen, wife of King Peles, so managed it that Lancilotto spent a night with her daughter and made love to her, believing that he took pleasure with Queen Ginevara. The damsel became pregnant, and when

her time came, by God's pleasure she gave birth to a very beautiful and gracious boy, who was called Galeazzo, or Galasso. The queen had him taken and nurtured in a rich nunnery, and made this known to Sir Lancilotto.

After a while, at the feast of Pentecost, it happened that King Artù's court was full of kings, counts, barons, and knights errant. At that time a damsel appeared in the hall, and she was dressed in costly garments. She greeted King Artù and all the other barons; then the king returned her greeting graciously, asking her what she desired.

She said, "Truly, sire, I would speak with Lancilotto."

The king replied, "There he is, talking with Sir Tristano."

Then the damsel went to that side of the hall, saying to Sir Lancilotto, "Sir, I ask you on behalf of the abbess of this nunnery to come and speak with her now."

Lancilotto answered, "For the sake of God, I will come very gladly."

Then without further delay he took leave of Tristano, armed himself and mounted. He rode until he reached the convent, where he found Sir Bordo and Sir Lionello. When Lancilotto had rested a little, the abbess appeared leading by the hand a young man, fifteen years old, who was called Galeazzo or Galasso, and she asked Lancilotto to dub him a knight.

Lancilotto said, "Gladly. But I have no sword to give him."

Then the abbess brought him the sheath of a sword which had belonged to Giosefette, the son of Giuseppe of Bramanzia, and Lancilotto fastened it around the boy, giving him a blow on both cheeks, praying to God to give him prowess and courage.

At that, the three older knights left the convent and returned to Camellotto. When they arrived at the palace, they found that King Artù and the other barons had gone to the great chapel to hear a sermon, and as the three knights gazed at the Seggio Periglioso, they saw letters appear on it, newly written. This is what they said:

"In 366 years after the passion of Cristo, on a day of Pentecost, this seat will be filled by its lord."

The three knights held this a great marvel. When they counted, they found that the time would fall in that Easter season, when the chair would be filled and claimed by its lord. They took a silken cloth and covered the new letters, waiting to see if this would be.

At that moment, all the barons returned from the great chapel. The tables were brought, the king asked for water, and they were just about to eat when Chieso said, "Sire, you may not eat yet, for we have not had any new tidings yet today."

The king replied, "You speak the truth."

Then they waited a little, and into the hall came a young squire who said to them, "My lords, I bring wonderful news. A marvellous stone of vermilion marble has appeared on the seashore—come and see it!"

Then the king and many of the barons went there, and found that the squire's tale was true, for they saw the stone with their own eyes. Into it was thrust a lance and a naked sword, on which letters were engraved which said this:

"No one will be so bold as to take me from my place except the one who will wear me at his side."

Then the king turned to Tristano and Lancilotto, saying to them, "My lords, this sword is yours, for one of you must be the knight of whom the letters speak."

But they said they were not worthy, neither of them, to put their hands to that sword. Then Sir Calvano came forward and grasped the sword to try to pull it from the stone, but he could do nothing with it. Prezzivale and Bordo also attempted it, but to no avail.

Then they returned to the palace, where by then many more knights errant had gathered, all of them except for King Amoroldo and Sir Palamidesso, who had gone to escort Queen Isotta to Gioiosa Guardia. And Tristano was very worried about these doings, because word had come that King Amoroldo had gone on to Irlanda, and that Palamidesso was staying with the queen in Gioiosa Guardia. That was not true; actually Palamidesso had rested there only one night, but Tristano, because of what he had heard, was very jealous. He hated Palamidesso now very much, saying that he never wanted to make peace with him, and would challenge him to fight to the death. In this he did Palamidesso great wrong.

As King Artù and the knights errant remained in the grand palace at Camellotto, a great darkness descended over them, and all the doors and windows of the hall were slammed to and fro. This darkness lasted a full hour, then afterwards into the hall came a holy hermit all dressed in white robes, leading by the hand a young knight fully armed except for a sword and shield, though he wore a sheath belted around him.

When the hermit came before King Artù, he said, "Peace be with you. I present this young knight to you; he is one through whom high adventures will occur. See him here: I entrust him to you in the presence of all these good people."

Then he led the young man by the hand and seated him in the Seggio Periglioso. The seat remained still and did not change, then they all heard a voice which said, "Sit boldy, for from now on the seat will be held by its owner Galasso, who is descended from two great houses."

When King Artù and the others knights saw Galasso sit safely in the seat that so many brave knights had feared, they said that truly this was the knight who would accomplish the high adventure of the Sangradale. Then they did him great honor, saying, "Many thanks, Galasso, that you have deigned to come among us."

Galasso replied, "If I have come here, it is no wonder, because from this

place will begin all the knightly companies who want to take part in the high quest of the Sangradale, for the salvation of their souls is in the power of the holy vessel."

And King Artù said, "Galasso, this morning there appeared on the shore a stone of vermilion marble. Let us go and look at it."

He took him by the hand, and behind them came Tristano and Lancilotto and many other barons. When they came to the stone that held the sword and the lance there on the sea shore, the king told Galasso how none of the knights had been able to pull them out of the stone.

Galasso said, "It is no wonder they have not pulled the weapons out. Look you, the adventure is mine, and because of the faith I have in this sword, I will carry no other."

Then he grasped the sword and the lance and pulled them easily out of the stone, and put the sword into the sheath he was wearing, for it had been made for that very sword. And this is the truth.

CIX.

The true story tells that when Galasso had pulled that sword from the stone, a damsel on horseback arrived at the place, who looked at Lancilotto and said to him, "Now you will not hold yourself, nor will others hold you, to be the best knight in the world. This is proved by the power of this sword which you were not bold enough to take in your hand."

Lancilotto replied, "Lady, be assured that I have not held myself to be the best knight in the world since I first fought with the knight of the silver band who was then wearing the insignia of two lions."

Know that the damsel spoke the truth, and Lancilotto had met his better, for by the grace of God Galasso was the most gracious and the best knight in the world except for Sir Tristano.

In the book brought by the premier of the king of Francia, which first belonged to Sir Piero, count of Savoia and is now owned by Sir Gaddo de' Lanfranchi of Pisa, this question is addressed, for it says that the one who is given more is held to be more. Wherefore we see that Galasso receives and bears the grace of God, and we are given to know that they are two principal graces. One is grace given freely, and the other is grace given as a reward. Everyone receives grace as a reward, but God also gave Galasso free grace, by which he pulled the sword out of the stone. So before his

shield had received one blow he was called the best knight in the world, because of the grace and the works of God. But Tristano was the noblest worldly knight ever born on this earth, the gentlest and the most courteous.

Then at once the damsel came before the king and said, "Through me the hermit Necienzo has sent to say that in these days the Sangradale will appear in your court, and will satisfy all with celestial food."

The king replied, "Now I know, knights and lords, and believe in truth and see by appearances that the time has come when the Tavola will be deserted, and you will all set out on the high quest which has been prophesied so often. I well know that we will never all come together again; thus, if you please, in memory of our chivalry, let us arm ourselves and hold one last tournament, in which the only weapon will be the lance."

King Artù proclaimed this because he wanted to test and observe Galasso. All agreed to it, and everyone returned to the city, armed themselves, mounted, and rode out to the meadow. There Galasso performed such deeds of arms it was a marvel to behold, for with a single lance he defeated King Artù, Lancilotto, Calvano, and Prezzivale, and many other knights, and he knocked Tristano down, horse and all.

Afterwards, they went back to the palace where they disarmed and sat down to the tables, for it was already nones. But before anyone could bring food to them they felt a shaking and a trembling so terrible that they were afraid the palace and the other buildings might fall into the earth, and there came a great shadow and a deep darkness. After that, there came a great splendor with such a fine perfume that it was like holy paradise. All wondered where such delight had come from, but no one was bold enough to speak, they were so stunned and also held back by thoughts of their sins.

And as they stood thus, through the hall of the palace passed the holy vessel, the Sangradale. It was covered in vermilion samite and carried by hands, but no one could see who carried it. As it passed through the hall it filled and satisfied the knights with all the foods the human body knew or could imagine. Then suddenly the grail vanished, and the knights remained very thoughful, not knowing where such delight had come from.

Then they gave praise and thanks to God who had satisfied and fed them with such sweet food. At that time the prophecy of Giuseppe was enacted, the prophecy which said: "Grace will be spread among the congregation of the Omnipotent, and all will receive it, and few will observe it."

Know that there were three principal tables. The first was that of the apostles, in reverence for the celestial table. To this table at Pentecost God sent the grace of the Holy Spirit, from which proceeded quickly and surely the power to preach and to endure death or suffering for the sake of Holy Love.

The second table was that of Giuseppe of Bramanzia, to which God sent through His grace the holy vessel or true ampulla made from the earth where

holy blood had fallen from the wounds of Cristo, and in it was the wine in which those wounds had been washed. Now the blood was no longer there, because when Cristo arose, the blood had left the earth to rejoin the body, or the divinity. The grace of this holy vessel made Giuseppe and his disciples ready and bold and firm in the faith of Cristo.

The third table, in reverent memory of this Giuseppe and designed and made by Merlino, was the Tavola Ritonda. At it was the Seggio Periglioso, and it had been prophesied of that seat that it would be claimed by a virgin knight who, through his virginity, was ordained to sit at the holy table and to fulfill the high quest of the Sangradale. This meant that he ate and drank at the holy table of holy faith and holy hope, which made him drunk with delight. For know that all other joys and experiences are nothing compared to thinking of and serving God. No one for whom the delights of this world have little worth can be deceived, for the glory of the high kingdom never fades away.

Therefore one should contemplate and love God above all of His creatures, and love his neighbor as himself, and do nothing to another he would not like to have done to himself. He should love the soul more than the body, for the body will become the food of worms and the immortal soul will be glorified. For the one who is penitent and does penance for his sins will be blessed, and he will be saved and will receive the recompense he has deserved, to know and see God, the incarnate Word. Thus we pray to Him that at our deaths we will not be held guilty of mortal or venial sins, so that our souls may be saved. And, so as not to be idle or to do evil, we will deliver this sermon to those who will listen.

CX.

The true story tells that as the knights errant were still at the tables, having felt the sweetness of Cristo's grace, King Artù spoke first, saying, "My lords, we should give great thanks to Cristo, and be grateful that he has here shown us such a great sign of his love that he fills us with celestial food."

At that, Sir Calvano got to his feet, saying, "My lords, I swear that in the morning without delay I will set out upon the high quest. And I will keep on for a year and month and a day, with great devotion and all the effort my body can make. And I will never return to court if I do not first learn something of the high quest."

And thus swore also Sir Lancilotto and Galasso and Tristano and Prezzivale and Bordo the Chaste and many other knights errant; there were 185 in number, and they were the flower of the knights errant.

Then King Artù wept, saying, "Alas, Calvano, how you have deserted and saddened me, for I am certain I will never see you again, you will be going through strange lands for such a long time."

And Lancilotto said, "Alas, sire, don't be so unhappy, for even if we all die, we will die blameless, so just is this undertaking."

As they lingered there a while, they heard a voice saying, "I say to you, my lord knights of the high quest, do not be so bold as to enter this high adventure without first repenting and confessing your sins."

And the knights did so. When evening came, they all went to rest. After the night passed, all the knights of the high quest armed themselves and mounted, riding until they came to the castle of Magani. Here Galasso said to them, "My lords, it seems to me better that we go on alone, or at most two or three together."

The knights agreed to this, and each one chose his own way. Tristano and Lancilotto went toward the Valle Bruna, Bordo and Prezzivale toward Lestenois, and Sir Galasso went to an abbey, where he found the white shield with the red cross which Giuseppe of Bramanzia had left there. No knight had been able to fasten this shield around his neck, because whenever any one had tried to bear it away a celestial knight appeared, all dressed in white, who took it back and returned it to the abbey.

But Galasso took it then and carried it for the rest of his life. When he had taken the shield he went on his way, as our book tells, pursuing the high quest. Now the story leaves Galasso and the other knights on the high quest, and we will speak of Tristano and Lancilotto.

CXI.

In this part the story tells how Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto rode on day after day doing nothing but thinking about their sins. They rode so far into the Valle Bruna that they found themselves at the foot of the great mountain of Rocca Forte. They found that Sir Sigurans the Brown had passed out of this life, and everyone thought that he had died of the fall he had taken jousting with Tristano.

The two knights rode on through the countryside until by the road they found a marble column from which there hung an ivory horn. Tristano sounded it twice. At once, two armed knights rode out of a castle; one was Galinas, the son of Sir Gurone, and the other was Sir Trassino the White. Then the knights all challenged each other, and traded great blows, so that Tristano defeated Sir Trassino, and Lancilotto unseated Galinas.

Then the two knights rode on until they came to a bridge on the other side of which they could see a strong castle. The bridge was guarded by twenty-five bold knights, and no armed person could cross without first jousting and fighting with those knights.

Tristano pressed Lancilotto to allow him the battle, and Lancilotto granted him his wish. Then Tristano made sure of his seat on his good destrier and rode against all twenty-five knights, attacking in their midst like a lion among beasts. He jousted so well that before his lance was broken he had struck twelve knights to the ground, dead or wounded; his own horse was dead under him; and he himself was wounded in two places.

Lancilotto dismounted at once and gave his horse to Sir Tristano, who mounted, drew his sword, and began to attack anew, doing such deeds of arms it was a marvel to see. In a short while he had killed or routed all twenty-five of the knights.

Then they crossed the bridge, and the people of the castle came before them crying, "Viva, the best knight in the world!" They made Tristano lord of the castle of Pontefermo and all the country around. Tristano left as his viceroy the knight who seemed best proved in battle, a man called Inamante, and this Inamante gave Tristano his own good destrier.

Tristano and Lancilotto resumed their ride through that country, and on the third day they rode through the middle of a great fortress called Sangranar, and as they passed through, two bold knights rode out against them, demanding a joust and saying, "Sir knights, you can by no means pass this way unless you joust, or unless you leave us your horses and go on foot."

Tristano replied that to go on foot did not suit him; therefore they wished to joust. Then each one rode against another and they gave four great blows; Lancilotto beat Sir Broncone, and Tristano, Sir Sodoc, the son of Amorotto of Lestenois. But when Tristano and Lancilotto started to ride away, the two defeated knights took their horses by the bridle, saying, "Sir knights, you cannot leave the fortress, according to our custom, if you do not first take our horses, because you have earned them well."

So Lancilotto took their horses and gave them into the keeping of squires, and they went on their way. When they had passed through the Valle Bruna they entered the Valle Selvaggia, and in this country they accomplished many fine adventures. There they defeated Sir Cudinello, son of Sir Estorm di Rivello, and they also defeated a nephew of Sir Scanoro the Great. They killed a treasonous and evil giant, and two other giants, his sons. But first

there was a bitter and dangerous battle, because the giants were very powerful.

After that, they rode into the Valle Franca, and as the two knights were riding they met a damsel on horseback who told them that at the head of this valley, at the castle of Ferelois, Sir Abastunagio, son of Prince Galeotto, had gathered a good number of knights to make a tournament in honor of his daughter. He planned to give her in marriage to the knight who proved himself best. Tristano and Lancilotto rode that way.

When they came to the place, they found the assembly just ready to begin. The trumpets sounded once, then twice, and at the third blast all the knights began to fight. Tristano and Lancilotto went through the field like a pair of lions, doing such deeds of arms that all the people gave way to them out of fear: they routed the whole tournament.

As they were fighting like that, fortune brought Sir Galasso that way. He began to fight in the tournament and knocked down both Lancilotto and Tristano, horses and all. He unhorsed many other knights, throwing the whole tournament into confusion, then went on his way so secretly that no one found out who he was. Tristano and Lancilotto rode after him to find out his name, but they could not find him anywhere.

CXII.

The masters of the stories tell that as Tristano and Lancilotto rode through the Valle Franca after they had crossed the Valle Bruna and the Valle Selvaggia, they came to a bridge which spanned a broad river called Labranico. There the two knights encountered four damsels on horseback who said to them, "My lords, it seems to us that you are not well accustomed to this country. Know, therefore, that if you cross that bridge you will enter the Valle Pericolosa, from which no knight has ever returned, so dangerous are the adventures there. No knight of the Tavola Vecchia would ever enter there, out of fear.

"On that mountain over there is a strong fortress, the lords of which are two giants, the biggest and strongest and most vigorous that exist in this world. They kill every knight who comes there, and you can't avoid the castle because the road goes right through the middle of it. So we pray you by the one God that you will not go there to your deaths."

At that, the two knights stopped and began to think, and Tristano said, "Sir Lancilotto, we are knights errant, therefore it would be a great coward-

ice for us to go out of our way for fear of giants. If you please, I would like us to go on and fight with them, and set the countryside free."

Lancilotto replied that this suited him well. Cheerfully they crossed the bridge and rode straight on through the Valle Perigliosa, meeting many shepherds who said to them, "Alas, my lord knights, if you go any farther you are going to die!"

Still the two knights did not stop going directly on their way, and Tristano kept encouraging Lancilotto very much, saying, "Sir, the more uncertain the countryside, the more likely it is to hold high adventures, so let us not grow dismayed."

Riding thus, they soon arrived at the castle of Sidravalle. There they met an aged knight, who had been one of the company of the Tavola Vecchia and lord of the country, but who now, out of fear, was liegeman to the two giants. When he saw the knights, he recognized them as knights errant, and he began to weep heavily, not because he was not glad to see them, but because he worried about them and pitied them, because he thought they had come to die.

He said to them, "What sin or what misfortune has brought you here to die?"

But Lancilotto replied, "Sir, no sin nor misfortune has led us here. We have come of our own free will to do battle with the two giants. Thus we pray that you will go to them and tell them on our behalf that of two things they must choose one: they must either keep their castle and the countryside as vassals of King Artù, or come and do battle with us."

Then the ancient knight went to the two giants and gave them the message. They armed themselves at once with shields and maces, for they used no other arms. They came to the field and said to the two knights, "My lords, your arrogance will become less, for you have the look of knights errant, and we will have no pity on you, all for the sake of a knight known as Tristano of Cornovaglia, who killed Lucano and Urgano, our own brothers. Because of him we have made all knights errant who come this way die painful deaths. Oh, if only we could get our hands on this Tristano!"

At that, Tristano stepped forward, saying to them, "My lords, your god has sent you special grace, because here is that Tristano of Cornovaglia who killed Urgano the Hairy in the service of Duke Bramante, and put Lucano the Great to death at the tower in the wilderness. It is not enough for me that I am not sorry for killing those two, so I have come to finish you."

The two giants, hearing these words, became so red in the face with anger they were almost on fire. Without another word they rushed at the two knights, striking at them, and beginning a cruel and dangerous battle. The giants were on foot and the knights on horseback, but the giants were so tall that even on foot they were taller than the knights on horses by more than four feet.

The two knights began to strike the giants' shields, first with their lances and then with their swords, but they found their leathery hides so hard, they could do no damage. The giants struck them with their heavy maces so that their helmets and shields were shattered. The battle was mighty and dangerous, and lasted for a long time, but when the two knights saw that they could do nothing to damage their opponents' leather shields, they sought shelter from the skirmish and they struck the two giants out in the open, so that finally they brought them to an end, although Lancilotto was badly wounded and his horse was killed.

Afterwards, the two knights gave the lordship of the castle to Sir Gabrionello, the old knight. They baptized the knight and all the household, and made them swear to keep castle and countryside under King Artù.

When the two noble knights had passed through the Valle Perigliosa, they turned left into the Valle Ombrosa, because on the other side was the Valle Spinosa, through which they could not go, the way was so wild and full of wild beasts and savage men, and was in such deep darkness. On that day Tristano and Lancilotto rode until they reached an abbey of monks. Here Lancilotto dismounted from the horse that Sir Gabrionello had given him, and stayed to rest, because he was badly wounded.

Tristano took leave of him there and went on his way seeking adventure, and Lancilotto asked him to come back in ten days.

CXIII.

The true story tells that as Tristano rode on all alone he entered the Valle Ombrosa. He rode through it for two days without seeing anyone except his own squire. But as he was riding on, one day at the hour of vespers he met Palamidesso. When he saw Tristano, Palamidesso greeted him, but Tristano would not return his greeting, because he had hated him very much ever since the time he had escorted Queen Isotta to Gioiosa Guardia.

Palamidesso, when he saw that Tristano would not speak to him, said, "Tristano, I know that there can be no peace and concord between us because you are always suspicious of me. I had rather die than be in such a state of war; therefore be assured that I will meet you early in the morning by Merlino's stone, and we will fight until one of us is dead.

"That will be good, because if I die I will be freed from this state of war and you will be free of your suspicions about me, and if I kill you, I will be free to love and look at whoever pleases me."

But according to what the master book has shown in all other stories and legends, Palamidesso did not arrange to meet Tristano in battle on the next day because he really wanted to fight with him, but rather so that he himself could escape. For when Palamidesso saw that Tristano hated him and would not speak to him, he was worried that Tristano would summon him to battle at that moment.

And it is no wonder, for there was not at that time a knight errant or a foreign knight so bold that he wanted to find himself in battle against Tristano, for his prowess and his reputation were then too great. Therefore Palamidesso is not to be blamed for not wanting to engage in battle with one so much more powerful than he. In all the fights that Palamidesso ever had with Tristano, he was always the loser. Know that Palamidesso was a good knight: bold, gentle, courteous, and he would have been of great reknown throughout the world, except that when he and Tristano were in conflict he never went adventuring where he thought he might meet Tristano, for fear of having to do battle with him. Because of this, he did not prove himself as well in deeds of arms as he might have done, for he was one of the four boldest knights of the Tavola Ritonda.

So, as our book shows, Palamidesso arranged to meet Tristano in battle on the next day, for the reasons given. Tristano, hearing his words, was well content, and so there would be no mistake he went straight to Merlino's stone and spent the night there. But Palamidesso went on his way, saying to himself that he would go to such a far country he would not meet Tristano again that year. Tristano stayed beside the stone and waited for Palamidesso to come, and just past the middle of the night fortune brought Sir Lancilotto that way, riding in search of Tristano.

Tristano, hearing the approach of a knight, believed that it was surely Palamidesso, and called him to battle. Then they pulled out their swords and began to hit each other very hard, and they fought so roughly that their armor was broken to pieces. Lancilotto, marvelling at the fierceness of Tristano's attack, said to him, "Knight, for courtesy's sake, let us rest from our battle and tell me your name."

Tristano replied, "Palamidesso, Palamidesso, don't make fun of me. We are at the place you named, and only one of us will leave here alive, as we have agreed. If I took Queen Isotta from King Marco, I do not for that intend you to take her from me. Therefore defend yourself; I challenge you!"

Lancilotto wondered greatly at those words, and said to Tristano, "Knight, I have no desire for the sins of Palamidesso to be purged through me, for be assured that I am not Palamidesso, but Lancilotto del Lago."

Then the two knights went out into the road where the moonlight was shining, and recognized each other. Tristano told Lancilotto what he and Palamidesso had arranged, and the two of them waited for him until the hour of nones, and continued to wait until nearly the hour of vespers. Then

when Palamidesso still did not come, the knights left and rode on. As they rode, they came to a column in which letters had been carved that said this:

"O knight passing by, guard yourself well and be not so bold as to go any farther. Because you can be neither so strong nor so bold but that you will be killed or imprisoned forever if you do not disarm completely, dismount, and lead your horse by hand. Know certainly that you are about to enter the Valle Scura, through which no knight may pass if he be armed or on horseback. The valley is ruled by a pagan knight who is bolder and more fierce than all the knights together of the Valle Bruna and the Valle Franca."

When the two knights had read those letters they began to think and to hold back their horses, and Sir Lancilotto, who was wise, said to Tristano, "I remember that our Lord God has said there is no use in kicking against a spur; that is, one ought not go looking for trouble. You see that what lies here is no well used road or path, therefore it seems better to me that we go another way, for these letters were not carved here without good reason."

But Tristano, who was vigorous and young, said to Lancilotto, "We did not fear the words of the lady, or the shepherds, or other people who warned us against entering the Valle Perigliosa, and that turned out to be a good undertaking, one in which we claimed many people for Christianity. Now what cowards we would be to be dismayed or afraid because of words inscribed in a stone, and not to find out who this bold knight is who wants tired knights to walk and lead their horses.

"So I beg of you, Lancilotto, be content, for I have hope that with God's help, if we go armed and mounted through this valley it will be to good end. It would be too easy for this evil knight to overcome us if we go disarmed, and so I advise that we go armed and on horseback, well prepared. Then he can do his worst!"

So they rode on through the Valle Scura, and when they had gone three leagues they saw a strong fortress and great castle called Derudicanoro, whose lord was the knight Fellone, a man who knew the seven arts and had the strength of five knights as great as the knight with whom he was fighting, and be they many or few who fought with him he had five times their combined strength, however many they were.

As Tristano and Lancilotto came near that castle they heard a horn sound two times, as if to say there were two knights, and a little later out of the castle came an armed knight who was very short, but who had thick arms and legs. He rode a black horse, short, thick, and very sturdy. When he met Tristano, who rode in front, without a word he struck him on the helmet with the iron mace he was carrying, which weighed 300 pounds. That blow was so heavy it sent Tristano to earth, horse and all, and because of that blow he fell unconscious, and one could feel neither pulse nor vein.

Lancilotto then truly believed that Tristano was dead, and with great sorrow he lowered his lance and rode to strike the knight Fellone with all his strength. But he could not bend him over the saddlebow, for he found him stronger than a well-built tower.

The knight struck Lancilotto on his shield with the heavy mace, and sent him sprawling to the ground. Then he picked him up by the back of his helmet, flung him across the neck of the black horse, and carried him to the castle. He put him into his prison, where 160 knights were already locked up. Lancilotto, greatly mourning, told them how his companion Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia had been left dead on the ground. Then Lancilotto and the other knights who had recognized him made the greatest lament in the world, saying, "O Tristano, full of prowess and courtesy, now is brought low all the honor and worth of the Tavola Ritonda and of all chivalry! O woe to us! How will we ever be set free, now that the source of all chivalry is dead?"

Thus they wept and made their complaint.

CXIV.

Regaining consciousness, Tristano looked around him and, when he did not see Lancilotto, began the loudest complaint in the world, saying, "How unlucky I am! How have I lost my loyal companion? O courteous Lancilotto, how will I live without you? I would rather be dead than alive! Alas, Iesu Cristo, give me help and counsel!"

Then, lamenting greatly, he got back on his horse, saying that one of two things would happen: "Either I will find Lancilotto again, if he is alive, or I will die."

As he rode toward the fortress he met a damsel on horseback who said to him, "Knight, know that you are on your way to fight a warrior so great that you cannot possibly endure against him. Through the power of enchantment he has the strength of five. And I declare to you that I am the daughter of Lancilotto. I live in the forest of Corbanio doing penance, and I have come here only to save you. If you will do as I tell you, you will be the victor, and Lancilotto, who is imprisoned, will be set free. If you will not, then you will be killed, and Lancilotto will be a prisoner forever.

"Know, then, that before the gate of this castle is a ruined chapel; inside the chapel is a small crucifix. Go in and promise God that you will sin no more with Queen Isotta. Then you can go safely to the encounter, and for each blow the knight delivers cry out at once 'Iesu Cristo, help me!' Each

time you say it, your enemy will lose the strength of one."

Then Tristano turned away from her and went into the chapel before the crucifix, and faithfully made his difficult promise to God. Afterwards, he went on to the castle where the knight Fellone rode against him. They began to fight, but because of the great promise Tristano had made, he came out the victor. Among many great blows Tristano struck one on Fellone's helmet with his sword that sent the enchanter to earth, horse and all, and through the words Tristano cried each time the other attempted to hit him—that is, "Iesu Cristo, help me!"—the knight's strength waned so that soon Tristano had a lot more than he.

The result was that when Tristano had knocked him off his horse, then had dismounted to cut off his head, Fellone said to him, "Knight, do not kill me. I have in my prison many knights who can only be set free by my own hands."

Then Tristano tore off the knight's helmet and took him by the hair, dragging him to the castle. It was already the dark of night; inside the hall the knight showed neither pulse nor vein, but seemed like a dead body. When Tristano saw this, he sat down on his back, saying that he would finish with him in the morning. After he had been there for quite a while, Tristano saw hands and arms preparing a table of fine food and afterwards bearing bright torches. Tristano approached that part of the hall, dragging Fellone behind him. He laid him down and made a stool of him and began to eat, for he had great need of food.

When Tristano had eaten, he saw that one of the hands took a torch and carried it into a chamber. He followed it and, so that Fellone could not trick him, he pulled him behind and kept his sword bared in his hand. Inside that chamber he found two rich silken beds; he lay down on one all armed and put the knight at its head.

After he had rested a while, he saw a damsel who looked like Brandina walk through the room, and much he marvelled at it. As he stood up in wonderment, he heard a voice say, "Know, Queen Isotta, that your Tristano is in this palace." Afterwards, he heard another voice say, "I have gone looking for him, for if I do not see him soon I will die of sorrow." Then it said, "Tristano, Tristano, now I am happy, for since you left me I have not had one good day. Now come lie by me in this other bed."

Tristano, hearing those words and that voice, which seemed to him to be Queen Isotta's, believed truly that she was beside him. Without delay he disarmed himself completely except for his sword and ran to the other bed. He was about to get into it, believing Queen Isotta was there, when he heard a loud knocking and the sounds of a storm so great that truly it seemed that the palace would fall into the deep. When he looked, he saw that the bed was on fire, and he heard a voice say, "Tristano, you have been deceived."

Then Fellone, who had been feigning death, got to his feet and came to capture Tristano. When Tristano saw all this he was so afraid that he became very penitent and threw himself on the mercy of Cristo crucified. He gripped his sword in his hand and when Fellone reached out his own right hand to seize him he struck it such a blow that he cut it off, and was about to kill him. Seeing himself so badly wounded, the knight begged Tristano to spare him, swearing that he would be baptized, and free the prisoners, and maintain his fortress as King Artù's liegeman.

Tristano pardoned him; then they brought all of the knights out of prison, 162 of them, among whom were fourteen who had been on the High Quest. Lancilotto, when he saw Tristano, was the happiest knight in the world, and they went on their way together.

CXV.

The true story tells that when Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto rode up out of the Valle Scura, where they had freed the land so that men could come and go, on foot or on horseback, armed or disarmed as they pleased, they came to the castle of Cologia. Here they found that a multitude of knights had gathered for a tournament, and they were all Saracens.

As the two knights rode into the castle they heard a proclamation cried on behalf of Count Sebio that if any single knight with no aid but a squire would take the field in the morning against the count and a hundred of his retainers and win, the count would give him his daughter in marriage, with lordship over castle and country. But if this knight were the loser, if he could not prevail over Count Sebio and his hundred knights, the count would have his head and his squire's head, too. All the knights, hearing of such odds, were scarcely eager to choose them, even though the count's daughter was very beautiful. They thought the bargain should be better if the count was truly eager to marry off his daughter.

At that point, Tristano and Lancilotto were riding through the castle even though no one had invited them to lodge; the people there were too ignorant and discourteous. Tristano and Lancilotto were very unhappy about this, not so much for themselves as for their horses. Then one poor, aged knight, seeing the two strangers riding thus, invited them to his dwelling, saying to them, "My lords, if it may please you at all to come to my poorly served house, I invite you there with a good will."

Tristano and Lancilotto gladly accepted the invitation, because they needed it. When they had dismounted and disarmed, the old knight had them arrayed in what robes he had, and invited them to sit by the fire. He so exerted himself to buy and to beg that he acquired an abundance of provisions, and had them served by one of his sons, and by his daughter, a lovely maiden. When the two knights had eaten, he led them to rest in his own chamber, and laid himself down in another part of the house.[29]

All that night Tristano thought of nothing but of how he might repay this man for the great honor he had done them. He decided to ride against the count and his hundred knights and win the count's daughter for the poor man's son. When morning came, Tristano told Lancilotto his plan, and Lancilotto agreed to it. They armed themselves and mounted, thanked their host warmly, and took their leave. Lancilotto rode in front, like a lord, and Tristano rode behind him with a sword slung over his shoulder, disguised as a squire.

When they came to the piazza, Lancilotto sent word to the count that he wanted to fight him and win his daughter. The count said he was glad of it, and reminded him that the agreement was this: if he, Count Sebio, lost, he would surrender his daughter and all of his power, but if he won he would do to Lancilotto and his squire what he had already done to others, for he had cut off more than seventy heads.

Having seen Lancilotto and his squire he armed himself quickly, and Lancilotto had Tristano, his servant, armed like himself. Then they rode to the meadow where the encounter was to be. Tristano, seeing that the count was ready, went to Lancilotto and said, "Bear yourself bravely against the count, for we must do this: first, because we will reward our host for the great service he has done us, and second, because these are all Saracens, and God will reward us if we destroy them all."

Then Lancilotto rode toward the count and challenged him, and they came together with great vigor, exchanging two such great blows that their lances shattered. Then they drew their swords and began a cruel battle. While Lancilotto fought the count, the bold Sir Tristano, who was not permitted to use a lance, drew his sword and rode among the hundred knights like a lion among beasts. He did then such deeds of arms it was impossible to see them all, but still he had much to do, for they all struck back at him together, some with lances, some with maces, and some with swords, and he was wounded in many places. But in the end, because he delivered such heavy blows, he routed them all, killing more than thirty-six before the others fled, renouncing the count's service and their pay, for they held themselves paid well enough to be overcome by the prowess of a single squire.

Then Tristano, not needing to fight any longer, dismounted, hobbled his horse, and went to watch the battle between Lancilotto and the count. Lancilotto struck vigorously; each one's armor was bent and broken, and they

were wounded in many places. But as they fought Lancilotto struck the count such a blow on his helmet that he sent him to earth badly hurt, and the count soon died of that wound.

When Lancilotto looked around he saw Tristano sitting there and said, "Now what is this, knight?" And Tristano said he had finished his chore, and since there was no one to give him any more trouble, he was resting. At this Lancilotto laughed out loud, saying, "It is a good thing to have a squire so worthy of honor."

Then Tristano and Lancilotto had all the people baptized, and gave the count's daughter in marriage to the son of their host, and gave the host's daughter as wife to the count's son. To the count's son they gave the name of Sir Dona Avventura, and they named the host's son Sir Richevi Ventura; Lancilotto knighted the count's son and Tristano knighted the son of their host. Then they left, and rode many days without other adventure.

Coming to two boundary posts, Tristano and Lancilotto took leave of each other, because Tristano was leaving the quest for the Sangradale to go back to the beautiful Queen Isotta the Blonde. And if he departed without leave—for he was not dismissed—it was because he was not worthy, that is, chosen to receive grace, that he might leave behind all thought of sin. He was more desirous of seeing Queen Isotta than of sitting at the Holy Table where the twelve knights would be who had no thought of carnal sin, or hate, or pride—for there was no sin of avarice in those days.

Know that his desire to see Queen Isotta robbed Tristano of the grace not to see or feel such thoughts, and if this had not been so he would have been of the first to see and to taste from the holy vessel because of his courtesy and loyalty.

When Lancilotto parted with Tristano, he rode straight to the castle at Corbeniche, to the place where the knights of the Tavola were supposed to be, but because his heart was occupied with other things, its true semblance was at first hidden from him. Still, finally he came to the spiritual castle, where he was struck unconscious and lay in a trance for twenty-four days, as he had been in the sin of intemperate lust for twenty-four years. In a vision he saw a deer carried by four angels, and the deer became a human child, then changed back to a deer again. At the end of twenty-four days, Lancilotto came to himself.

Now the story stops telling of Lancilotto, and we will speak again of Tristano.

CXVI.

The masters of the story tell that when Sir Tristano left Sir Lancilotto behind he rode into the kingdom of Lestenois, and went for three days without meeting adventure. One day, as he was rounding the foot of a great slope and riding onto a lovely plain, he met a grand and venerable baron, the lord of that country, who was called Sir Altamondo, with a company of 140 knights. Riding in front was a young knight, the boldest in that country, named Sir Lucanoro, son of the brutal castellan of the fortress of Gitedrano.

When Sir Lucanoro saw Tristano, he challenged him to joust, and they rode apart to begin the fight, then exchanged two great blows. Lucanoro struck Tristano with his lance, piercing shield and hauberk clear to the flesh, but still he could not bend him over the saddlebow; Tristano struck with such skill that Lucanoro's shield and hauberk were not worth a button, putting his lance through the middle of the young knight's heart and sending him dead to the ground.

At this, Sir Altamondo and the others raised a loud lament, and Tristano rode toward them, saying, "My lords, I am very sorry for what has happened, but for all that, I deserve no blame. He is the one who summoned me to battle."

Sir Altamondo replied, "We lament our great loss, but we have no hatred for you. We ask only for courtesy's sake that you tell us your name, and then you may go on your way."

Tristano told them, then departed and rode until evening, when he came to an abbey of monks where all of his needs were attended to. In the morning he took leave and went on his way. He rode for two days without seeing the face of a knight, making his way through woods and forests. He rode until he reached a fine, strong fortress; he entered and was gently received by the castellan.

When the tables were made ready, Tristano and his host sat down and were courteously served. The castellan looked at Tristano and saw that he was such a fine, young knight, and he began to weep aloud. Tristano asked him what it was that had changed his aspect so, and why he wept thus bitterly.

The castellan said to Tristano, "Sir knight, I weep and lament for good reason, for it has not been eight days since my son was killed, a young man about your age called Sir Lucanoro. He was killed by a knight who called himself Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia. If God would grant me the grace to get my hands on him, how gladly I would cut off his head!"

Tristano replied, "Ah, my lord castellan, these things that happen in adventures at arms ought not to be held a shame or a dishonor."

At that, the knight rose from the table, and it seemed to Tristano a thousand years until morning might come and he could get out of the fortress. Then a squire came in who had been present when Tristano had killed the castellan's son. When he saw Tristano, he recognized him; he called the castellan aside, saying, "Sire, you have here in your house the knight who killed your son."

The castellan said to the squire, "Valet, say nothing more. Leave this to me."

After a while, Tristano was led to rest in a chamber where a luxurious bed had been prepared. The castellan meanwhile had fifty knights armed, and had Tristano's sword secretly removed. Then the knights went to his room and the castellan had them seize him and lock him securely in prison, saying that his head would be cut off in the morning.

When morning came he armed himself and 140 knights, and took Tristano out of the castle toward the place where justice was to be done. On their way they encountered the knight errant called Palamidesso the Pagan. Palamidesso, seeing that Tristano was being taken to the place of execution, rode toward him saying, "Sir knight, now your pride must wane, and soon you will be paid back for your great haughtiness. I for one will be right glad of it."

But Tristano answered him, "Palamidesso, if I die, it will not be through your prowess, and of this you may be sure: I am unjustly condemned. Only one thing comforts me, that you will never again be honored among knights errant when they find out that you let me die in this way."

Then Palamidesso thought a little, saying to himself, "Alas, Lord God, what am I doing to let Tristano die like this? Never again will I be held worthy among knights, and King Artù and the knights errant will seek vengeance on me. They would be right to do it, too, if I let the nobility and prowess of all chivalry die."

So he decided to do all in his power to help, then rode up to the brutal castellan, saying, "Sir, I ask that for courtesy's sake you pardon Tristano your ill will, and for the sake of grace render him to me."

But the castellan replied, "Knight, before I pardon Tristano I would let myself be cut in pieces, and if you argue with me any more, I will have your head as well as his."

Then Palamidesso said to himself, "So. There is nothing for me to do but fight as hard as I can."

They rode apart, then Palamidesso lowered his lance and struck the castellan on the shield, cutting through shield and hauberk, piercng him clear to the heart with the iron point and sending him dead from his horse. He commanded his squire to disarm the dead man and give the arms to Tristano. Then Palamidesso defeated a second knight and a third, and before his lance was broken he sent seven knights to the ground. Then he drew his sword and began a vigorous attack.

When Palamidesso looked to see where Tristano was, he saw that his captors had abandoned him, and that the squire had unbound him and given him the castellan's armor and horse. Already he was armed and fighting boldly. Then Palamidesso, seeing how Tristano did, drew near him and the two of them fought nobly, so that in a short time all the people were killed or routed.

Afterwards, they entered the fortress, where all the people were at their mercy. Tristano found his own good horse, his armor, and his good sword; he put on his own arms and left those of the castellan.

When they had rested a little Palamidesso said, "By my faith, Tristano, you were not very bright when you thought that I would come lay down my life at Merlino's stone with you. For look you, if I had come the results would have been very bad. I am sure you would have finished me off, and if you had, then the castellan would have killed you, for I would not have been here to rescue you as I have done.

"And I tell you there is no need for enmity between us, for I swear by my faith that from the day you in courtesy offered me peace before Gioiosa Guardia, I have never looked toward Queen Isotta, nor made one improper gesture. I give thanks to God that I love her with a loyal love, as a brother loves his sister."

Tristano said, "Palamidesso, you are the knight who has rescued me from death. Therefore be sure that I am your knight; I swear that never again will there be war between you and me."

Then they finished their talk, and Palamidesso said that he would like to keep the fortress for himself, to live there and rest himself for about three months. Tristano said he was pleased with that, for Palamidesso had certainly earned it. Then he took leave of Palamidesso and rode toward the kingdom of Longres and the castle of Gioiosa Guardia.

Now the tale stops speaking of Sir Tristano, and tells about Sir Prezzivale, who was a companion of the sacred table of the Sangradale.

CXVII.

The true story tells that as Sir Prezzivale rode off all alone seeking the adventure of the Sangradale, he came to a small hermitage where he found one of his sisters doing penance, and she was called the Queen of the Wasteland. When she saw Prezzivale she did him great honor and told him how she had come to this place to do penance on the day their mother had died, saying, "She died of sorrow after you left her."

Prezzivale prayed that God would have mercy on his mother's soul, then he asked, "Lady, might Sir Galasso and Sir Bordo the Chaste have arrived here today?"

She replied that everyone here dwelt apart, but said, "Soon the high God will gather you together for the great adventure, and it will be through your perfect virginity that you will eat together at the holy table of the Sangradale."

For it should be known that there were three principal tables. The first was that of Cristo for his apostles; the second, patterned after the first, was ordained by Cristo and kept by Giuseppe di Bramanzia with more than 6,000 people. Among these were three brothers, nephews of Giuseppe, and one of these left the table out of pride and swelling arrogance, saying, "I do not want Giuseppe for my master. I am as noble as he!"

Then out of pride he seated himself in a grand triumphal chair and fell into the abyss. The chair opened and the earth would not sustain him, so that he was swallowed up. From then on, no knight had been bold enough to sit in that chair. This table of the Sangradale existed forty-four years after the passion of Cristo.

It was in memory of the Sangradale that the Tavola Ritonda was ordained in Gerusalemme by the knight who was the son of Merlino the Prophet, and was filled with the best knights who could be found in the world. Then Merlino placed at the table that chair from which the nephew of Giuseppe had disappeared, and named it the Seggio Periglioso. He prophesied that whoever sat in it would disappear except for one virgin knight, the most gracious knight in the world. "This will be Galasso," Merlino had said to Prezzivale. "He will sit at the table of the Sangradale, and you and Bordo will keep him company."

Then Prezzivale asked his sister about her son Bencin, and she said he was in the service of King Peles. Prezzivale slept that night on the bare

ground, for neither he nor any knight deemed worthy of the high quest could sleep in any other bed. When morning came he took leave and went on his way.

As he was riding he met twenty knights transporting a bier on which a dead knight lay. When these knights saw Prezzivale they attacked and began to strike at him. He defended himself boldly, but finally they killed his good horse and were about to put an end to him, when fortune sent Sir Galasso that way. Galasso saved him from death and went on his way.

Then Prezzivale was left on foot all alone, and he could not walk because of the great heat and the weight of his armor. All at once there came an old lady with a great horse, and when she saw Prezzivale, she gave it to him. As soon as he had mounted it the horse began to run toward a broad river, and Prezzivale, who could not hold it back, made the sign of the cross and threw himself off. The horse leaped into the river and drowned. Here Prezzivale stayed that night, saying, "Alas, Lord God, who suffered and died for sinners, and who has led me into your service, guard and defend me from carnal sin."

When he looked up he saw a great serpent who was carrying off a little lion cub. There was a great lion in pursuit, barking and roaring. Then Prezzivale drew his sword, struck the serpent and killed it, and at that, the lion showed great joy.

As Prezzivale rested there in the moonlight it came to him in a vision and seemed true that he saw a lady riding on a lion who said to him, "Prezzivale, know that you are guarded from all temptation." It was our Lady, the holy Maria, and the lion was the evangelist—it was they who comforted him.

When day came Prezzivale looked at the great river and saw a ship all covered with black samite. In it there was a most beautiful damsel who received him with great honor. She came down from the ship and had a noble pavilion raised on the shore, and had a rich silken bed made inside. She invited Prezzivale to eat and drink, serving him very honorably. So beautiful she seemed and so well she pleased him that Prezzivale asked her for her love. She said, "If my love delights you, I will be well pleased."

Then she lay down on the bed, and Prezzivale was just going to her when his sword fell. As he bent down to pick it up he noticed the vermilion cross traced on its pommel. Looking at it, he remembered how he was sinning. He made the sign of the holy cross and asked God to protect him; when he did that the lady and the pavilion vanished.

As Prezzivale stood there, very thoughtful, a ship covered with white samite approached the river bank. In it was an old man with white hair who called out courteously to the young knight and had him enter the ship. The old man disappeared as soon as Prezzivale had boarded, but the knight heard a voice saying, "Prezzivale, have courage and fear nothing, for soon you will have the understanding which you have desired so long."

Prezzivale stayed on the ship which was provisioned with bread and fresh water, but because he was alone, he felt somewhat anxious.

Now the story stops telling about Sir Prezzivale and we will tell of Sir Bordo the Chaste, and how he fared in the high adventure of the Sangradale.

CXVIII.

The story is that Sir Bordo was riding all alone in search of the adventure of the Sangradale when he came upon a hermitage. Here he found a holy hermit who heard his confession, and Bordo vowed that as long as the quest should last he would eat nothing but bread and water.

Then the hermit offered him the body of Cristo, saying, "Do you see what I have in my hand?"

And Bordo replied, "I see that you are holding my savior in the semblance of bread, and I am certain it is the true God." Then with great reverence he received it.

After that, he left the hermit and rode on through the great forest. Then he saw a beautiful bird with varicolored feathers flying around a dead tree. Alighting on the tree the bird found many little birds lying dead: they were his children. At once with his beak he tore open the front of his chest, spilling blood all over the small birds, and they, by virtue of that blood, came back to life. That bird is called a pelican.

The blessed master Santo Agostino speaks of this, saying that in the power of his blood the pelican is like our lord Iesu Cristo who, seeing that we were dead to the grace and virtue of the Holy Spirit, and that the devils had won such great power over us miserable sinners that they were seizing us body and soul and carrying us into limbo, came to earth to endure passion and death for us. He spilled his precious blood all over us, and left here the teachings that quickened us who had been dead, so that we recognized the power and virtue of our lord.

Through these things the demons who hunt through heaven and earth lost the power they had over us, and through the virtue of that precious blood we were redeemed from death. Then we could see the right way to go and could return to the one through whom we had come into this world.

Thus we pray to him to give us grace and knowledge of how to live our lives, so that after our death we may return to him in holiest glory, from whom comes nothing less. *In perpetua secula seculorum, amen.*

Bordo, having seen the example of the pelican which killed itself to bring its children to life, came that same evening to a tall tower. Here a widowed lady lived who received Bordo gladly and did him great honor. She told him how King Amar had left her lady of all that country, saying, "But now I am very poor and poorly furnished, as you may see. After King Amar died, a tyrannous giant from another country took all my wealth, and to harm me he has seized the lady my sister." Bordo felt great pity for her.

In the morning he left and went on his way, riding all that day through a great valley. At night he rested at the foot of a tall tree and saw a great contest between two birds, one white and the other black. The white bird perched on a leafy branch of the tree beside two flowers, but the black one roosted on a withered and rotten branch.

When daylight came Bordo continued on his way, and at the hour of tierce he encountered his brother Lionello all naked, riding a wornout nag. Two knights were whipping him harshly and he was covered with blood. Just as Bordo was going to help his brother he looked and saw coming from another way an armed knight who led a beautiful woman, meaning to force her will and do her shame. She was crying and calling out, "O blessed virgin Maria, help your faithful servant! Don't let me lose my virginity!"

Then Bordo was very unhappy, saying, "If I don't help my brother he will die, and if I don't help the maiden, she will lose her virginity."

But he let his brother go and went to help the maiden, killing the knight who was leading her and letting her go on her way. When he returned to the place he had left his brother, he could not find him, but soon he met a friar on horseback who said, "Bordo, Bordo, if you ride on ahead you will find your brother."

Riding by a ruined chapel Bordo found a dead body, all bloody, and truly it seemed to be Lionello his brother. Then Bordo began the greatest lament in the world. He dug a grave with his sword and buried the body with much mourning.

Then he rode on and came that evening to a tower where a lovely lady dwelt with twelve beautiful damsels. The lady received Bordo with great honor, then said to him, "Bordo, I must tell you that I am so much in love with you that I can find neither rest nor repose. I promise you, if you will take delight with me I will make you the happiest knight in the world, but if you will not, I and these my maidens will throw ourselves to the ground from these tower windows."

Bordo replied, "Lady, know that I can in no way do your will in this." Then she and all of her damsels together threw themselves out of the high tower, but when he looked Bordo saw neither the tower nor the women. Then he thought it had all been the work of the devil, who wanted to deceive him.

CXIX.

Bordo rode on through the deep forest until he came to an ancient hermitage where lived an aged holy hermit, a man who had lived there over eighty years eating nothing but wild apples and spring water and wearing nothing but his own long hair which completely covered his skin. Bordo rested there that night and told him what had happened along the way. The hermit, whose nature was holy and wise, said[30];

"Bordo, since you received the blessed body of Cristo, and made confession and did penance for your sins, then Cristo the joyful savior appeared to you in the guise of a bird, alighting on the tree and tearing open his breast so that his children might live. He did this to perfect your faith, just as he descended to the tree of the cross and with his holy blood redeemed all mankind.

"And then you came to the house of the widowed lady left by King Amar as his heir, she whom the tyrannous giant had robbed. Know, Bordo, that this widowed and impoverished lady signified the holy mother church which upholds the Christian faith and is at war with the ancient laws, the false scribes, and the Pharisees; that is, with evil clerics and bad priests. She is poor because often faithful Christians rob her; that is, they offend her through their mortal sins.

"The giant, that great tyrant who forced himself on her sister, is one who at present does not exist but who will be. By force he will conquer seat and crown, rising finally to the great college, according with and marrying the widow's sister. Here he will be confirmed in his true being. He will pursue and constrain those things through which all faithful Christians will be glorified and increased in grace; he will cross the great river and come to an eternal chamber.

"I do not know how this will be, because slowly the enterprise will occur which will be called cured. The widowed lady, not seeing, will not be attacked except that her claim might be, but he will be among those who will guide her when their avarice and suspicion might shorten for them the way of the journey.

"But if it were thus, then afterwards the contest will be great and the fat beast will suffer, the one who interrupted the thin beast. This is the meaning of the two birds you saw contending with each other: the bird which

roosted in the rotting tree signifies those talking scribes who take away what will be ordained to those who will follow, and the bird which sat on the tree with two flowers stands for those who will follow and be true to the lady, that is to holy mother church. In such are two flowers; first, the hope of salvation, and second, the desire to dedicate themselves to the high quest.

"The ladies whom you found mean that, at the time I have described, the unlawful sin of lust was not a thing held in despite, rather it was in the lean as in the fat. And those of you who consent not, God will call you holy knights; thus he will do with everyone who resists that vice.

"And know that only through such sin, practiced in an unlawful way, also through a mortal vice which shall be but is not now, which others, as a sign of love and in a desire to multiply, will do, will this be, not for love but out of greed.

"And these will be enemies of God who will bring about a great persecution of mankind. They will act contrary to the way that you, Bordo, behaved when you left your brother Lionello in order to aid the maiden. You did this because you loved the soul more than the body. And those who are greedy and jealous of another's earnings love money more than soul or body. The soul will be lost, then the body will be worthless. Such people as these will be lost in this world and in the other; they will be unloved by friends or enemies. They will not abandon the world, but wealth will abandon them.

"Here it can be said that whoever has more will lose more, and with greater sorrow will pass away, leaving what he cannot take, taking what he cannot leave. Know, Bordo, that your brother Lionello is alive and not dead. The man you saw was the enemy, who wanted to deceive you."

After Bordo had rested there that night, in the morning he went on. He rode to the shore, where he saw approaching him a ship covered with white samite, carrying Prezzivale. Prezzivale called to Bordo who rode out to him and boarded the ship; then the wind, according to God's will, sent them onto the high seas.

Now the story stops speaking of Sir Bordo and Sir Prezzivale, and we will tell of the noble and gracious Sir Galasso who, out of all twelve companions, was the one to achieve the high quest, and who was the first to begin.

CXX.

The true story tells that as Galasso was riding in search of the adventure of the Sangradale he passed through the waste land of Corbeniche and arrived at an abbey. There a saintly abbot lived who received him honorably, taking him by the hand and leading him into the garden, to a tomb where a dead body lay, all on fire. Then that body spoke, saying, "Sir Galasso, welcome, for it is only through you who now gaze on me that I will be delivered from so much pain. God will permit it because of your pure virginity."

Then the bright fire suddenly died, and Galasso left and went on his way. As he rode along, he met a damsel who said to him, "Knight, for courtesy's sake, will you accompany me out of this wasteland?"

Galasso replied that he was ready to. Then the damsel led him to the shore where the ship carrying Bordo and Prezzivale lay at anchor. When they saw that they were all together, the three knights showed the greatest joy in the world; they unsaddled their horses and, leading them by the bridles, left them to graze beside the sea.

When all four of them were in the ship, that is, Galasso, Bordo, Prezzivale, and the maiden who was Prezzivale's sister, a wind arose which carried them onto the high seas, where they encountered another ship, richer and more beautiful than their own. As they neared that ship they could read engraved letters on its gunwale that said this:

"O knights, you who please to enter here, guard yourself well, for your entrance will be very dangerous if you have not faith and hope within you, and if you have not ceased from all the vices of sin."

Galasso boarded it first, then the maiden, then Bordo and Prezzivale. On board, they saw a bedstead covered with white samite; at its head was a golden crown and at its foot was a sword that had been pulled a hand's breadth out of its sheath. Over the bed hung three lengths of linen cloth, one white, one red, and the other green.

The knights marvelled greatly at these things, and the maiden Agrestizia, who was holy and pure and worthy, was inspired by God to tell them what it meant. She told them how King Salamone had had this ship made because he had found out that the most gracious knight in the world would be descended from his line. And for that reason also he put here the crown,

which had belonged to King Davidde, and also the sword, which King Pellinoro drew out as far as you see; but because he was not worthy to touch it, it wounded him on the right thigh. The sword is called Istragies Ragies, because Salamone's wife put here straps of tow.

And it had been ordained that on this bed should rest three virgins and one who was perfectly chaste. Of the three cloths over the bed, the white one stands for the tree which was in the middle of bright paradise, from which Eva and Adamo took the apple; then the tree which had been white became green to show how they had lost their innocence and come to the consciousness of sensuality which led them to sin, so that Caino killed Abello his brother. At that the green tree became red to signify the sin of spilled blood.

When the three knights lifted up the crown, they found under it a letter which told all about the ship, and said that the maiden, Prezzivale's sister, should change the belt on the sword. At that the maiden opened one of her coffers and pulled out a narrow belt she had made out of her own blonde hair cut off for chastity's sake. She fastened it to the sword, then Galasso put it on and did what no one had been able to do: he pulled it out and easily sheathed it again. Then Galasso gave his own sword to Prezzivale.

For three days they remained in prayer, and afterwards a wind came and sent the ship to shore. They disembarked to find their horses, then mounted and continued on. Thus they rode on their journey until they came to the castle of Chartelos, whose lord was the Count Erveus.

This count had three evil sons, all three of whom had bedded dishonestly with one of their own sisters and had then killed her. Because their father reproved them and said they had not done well, they threw him into prison.

When Galasso and his companions neared the castle they were attacked by the count's three sons with a hundred and fifty knights. There followed a cruel battle in which both Prezzivale and Bordo were wounded, but finally the knights errant had killed or routed all the people, and entered the castle to free the count.

This count, who was a man of holy life, said to Galasso, "Knight, go to the castle of the wounded king, because through you he will regain his health. I send you with God's blessing."

Then the count passed suddenly from this life, and Galasso had him honorably buried. Afterwards, the three knights and the maiden mounted their horses and continued on their way.

CXXI.

The masters of the story tell that Galasso, Prezzivale, Bordo, and the maiden rode on until they came to the Castle Aspetta Ventura. As they were passing the castle on foot some sixty knights came to meet them, accompanying a lady who held a silver bowl in her hand. The knights asked the three men if the lady with them were a virgin, and when Galasso said yes, they said, "Then you may not leave here unless that maiden will give for toll this bowl full of her blood. There lives here a lady—we are all in her service—who through God's will is suffering from a dangerous disease called leprosy. She has heard a prophecy that she may never be cured until she drinks this bowl full of the blood of a particular damsel, the virgin sister of Sir Prezzivale. Since we do not know who that damsel is, we must require the toll of every virgin who comes here, because she who was named to us will surely be among them."

Then Prezzivale stepped forward, saying that his sister would pay no such toll, for she was too young and delicate to suffer such torture. The sixty knights said that it would be done whether they liked it or not, and so there was great quarrel: they all drew their swords and began to fight. The battle was hard, but in the end the three knights killed their sixty opponents. Still they could not escape, for the lady of the castle sent more than 400 more knights after them.

Then the maiden came forward and said to them, "My lords, you have heard how terribly this lady is afflicted; be assured that through me she can be made well. And so to stop the evil custom by which so many ladies have perished in my place, and to prevent your fighting more, I will help her, and hope in God."

Then they entered the castle, and the maiden let the blood be drawn from her right arm; but before the bowl was full, she died, for it was very large.

The lady of the castle, when she drank that blood, was completely cured, and Galasso, Prezzivale, and Bordo, with loud laments, put the maiden's body into a little boat and sent it out to sea, giving her to God. After that, they left the castle of the Lady Verdoana, who for her cure had had more than 260 virgins killed.

The three knights rode on until they came to the castle at Corbeniche, where they were received with greatest honor. They disarmed completely,

except Galasso, who did not unfasten his sword. Here Galasso mended the broken sword with which Giuseppe had been wounded in the right thigh because he would not give in to temptation.

As they stayed there the weather began to change, and a wind arose, exceedingly hot, so fiery that they were all afraid they would die. Then they heard a voice which said, "All of those chosen to sit at the board of the Holy Table: go and sit down, and you will be filled with sacred celestial food."

Then the knights sat down, twelve of them, all on the high quest. After a little, they saw coming out of the next room four damsels carrying a bed in which lay a man of noble countenance who wore on his head a golden crown. This was King Peles, the grandfather of Sir Galasso, who had come to join the company. The maidens set the bed down in the middle of the hall, then withdrew. King Peles lifted up his head, saying, "Galasso, my grandson, you are very welcome, because through you will come my cure."

As the twelve knights were waiting, they looked toward the ceiling and saw someone descending, dressed like a bishop, carrying a cross in his hand. Then four angels carried the cross to the middle of the hall, among the knights, to the table of the Sangradale where Cristo had eaten with his apostles. The bishop had letters embroidered across his breast which said: "You see here Giuseppe, the first Christian bishop, consecrated by God in the city of Sarache, at the holy palace."

Then Giuseppe spoke to the knights, saying, "Servants of God, be comforted, and be ready to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit."

Then they smelled a strong perfume, and saw four angels come out of a room. One carried four burning candles, another carried a tablet of vermilion, and another a bleeding lance so that the drops all met together in a runnel, and the fourth carried a vessel into which the drops all fell.

They laid the tablet on Giuseppe's table, that is, the table of the Sangradale which had been in that castle since the time Giuseppe died, and had been in the holy chapel. On it also they put the lights, the lance, and the holy vessel, into which had fallen the precious blood.

Then Giuseppe entered to say mass, and afterwards took from the vessel a small crumb of bread. When he laid it in the middle of the table, the bread took the shape of a little boy, and Giuseppe held the child in his hands so that all the knights could see, then put it back in the vessel.

And when the holy mass was over, Giuseppe came to Galasso and gave him the kiss of peace, commanding that he kiss all the others. He did so, then Giuseppe said, "Knights, you who are laborers in the service of God, remain seated at this table and be filled and satisfied by holy grace."

With these words, Giuseppe disappeared; then they saw to issue from the vessel our Savior in the form of a naked man, his hands, feet, and side all covered with blood. And when he appeared, he spoke thus: "O my knights,

my loyal servants, you who have turned from mortal to spiritual things and have abandoned all sin, you have found grace. You have so searched for me that I cannot hide myself from you; therefore I give you my grace and my precious blood."

Then he came to Galasso and had him taste the blood, then to Bordo, then Prezzivale, then all the other knights. They were filled with all the sweetest food in the world, and Cristo said to them, "Now you have seen and touched the Sangradale, which will keep you strong and constant in my faith. And you, Galasso, Bordo, and Prezzivale, go to the shore where you will find the ship in which the sword Istragies Ragies lay. But first attend to the healing of King Peles."

Then he told Galasso to take blood from the lance and rub it on King Peles' thighs and hands. Galasso did this, and the king was healed at once. Then holy Cristo said to them, "Blessed sons, there are twelve of you, as there were twelve apostles. Go therefore where it seems to you that grace may be dispensed."

Then he vanished, and the knights saw him no more. At that, the knights stayed as though entranced; among them were ten virgins and two chaste men. Four were knights errant, three were from Gaules of the kinsmen of King Grandes, three had come from Irlanda and two from Scozia, and all came of noble families.

Know that Lancilotto was also on the adventure, and experienced something of it, as I have told, near the palace where Astore di Mare was with many other knights, but the rest of them experienced nothing. At this Sir Calvano felt great disgust, because he had been the first to begin the quest but was one of those left behind because of carnal sin. He became very cruel because of his disappointment, and in scorn of the quest killed more than thirty knights errant. He did it from sext to nones, when his strength was double.[31]

Now when Galasso and Prezzivale and Bordo were full of sacred celestial grace, they left the castle of Corbeniche, went to the shore, and found the ship I told you about before and boarded it. Looking at Salamone's bed, they saw the body of Prezzivale's sister, and over her head was the Sangradale. They took the body and the holy vessel and brought them to the sacred city of Sarache, where they put the vessel in the holy sacristy of the cathedral, and buried the maiden at the door.

That night, the king of the city, who was called Escoras, passed from this life according to God's will, and on the next day, the people of the city made Galasso king. He wore the crown they had found in the ship for one year, and afterwards his soul, in great holiness, left his body. Prezzivale and Bordo had him honorably buried. Then Prezzivale and Bordo left the city and Prezzivale went into the wilderness of Corbeniche to do penance. He became a holy hermit to serve God, living that way for a year and four months,

until he died. Bordo returned to the city of Camellotto, to tell what had happened on the high quest.

Now the story of the high quest for the Sangradale is ended, and we will tell how King Marco came to Gioiosa Guardia to reclaim the beautiful Isotta the Blonde.

CXXII.

The true story tells that King Marco, because he knew that his wife Isotta and Tristano his nephew were at Gioiosa Guardia, was the saddest king in the world, and would have agreed to give away his whole kingdom to recover his lady. After he had been in misery for a long time, he made a pact with the king of Sansogna, the king of Gualagne, and the king of Sobicio: all four swore to band together against King Artù, because they wanted to be free of him.

They were inspired to do it because at that moment King Artù was weakened by a lack of warriors, since the great barons and bold knights of the Tavola Ritonda were all away on the high quest. These four kings then besieged King Artù in Camellotto. While the siege was going on, King Marco found out that Tristano and Lancilotto were away in the Valle Franca and the Valle Bruna; secretly, accompanied by a hundred knights and four hundred foot soldiers, he rode toward Gioiosa Guardia. When he was near he put himself in ambush and waited three days.

One day Queen Isotta and her ladies came out of the castle to walk for amusement in the beautiful gardens, and then the king had her seized. When the people of the castle realized what had happened, they armed themselves at once and rode after the king and his men to take Isotta back. When they overtook King Marco's men they began a vigorous fight. It was a cruel battle; Sir Gulistante and Sir Lantris were killed in it, as were many foot soldiers on both sides. King Marco was wounded on his face, but in the end he led Queen Isotta away, sending her back to Cornovaglia under the guard of a hundred knights and two hundred foot soldiers. Then he returned to the siege at Camellotto.

Know that Brandina remained alone in Gioiosa Guardia when Queen Isotta was taken. When she saw that she had been abandoned, for she did not know what would happen to Isotta, and when she saw that Sir Lantris was dead, her sorrow was so great that she grew sick and died.

CXXIII.

The true story tells that the four kings remained for a while outside the city of Camellotto, but that when the siege had lasted twenty-eight days they were finally defeated by the prowess of Sir Palamidesso, Sir Mordarette, and other brave knights who had gathered to help King Artù. Then King Marco returned to Cornovaglia with the few knights that were left him, for the others had all been killed. But finding Queen Isotta there greatly comforted him, for when he saw her rosy face he forgot all his losses.

Then many messengers went out from Gioiosa Guardia to find Tristano and Lancilotto and tell them the dolorous news. One of the messengers had ridden for more than nineteen days when he met Tristano one morning on the border of Igres riding back to see the beautiful Isotta, departing without leave from the high quest, for he had not been discharged. But he had not overcome the will to sin, in order to have sacred grace.

When the messenger saw Tristano, he told him the sorrowful news, saying, "Tristano, twenty-six days ago King Marco entered the confines of Gioiosa Guardia, killing Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante and many others, and took Queen Isotta away with him." Then he told him how the four kings had been defeated at Camellotto.

Tristano, when he heard this cruel and deadly news, lost consciousness and fell off his horse, lying for a long time on the ground like one dead, for he was senseless. His face was pale and shadowed, like the face of a corpse. When he regained consciousness, he began the greatest complaint in the world, saying, "O embalconied rose, how have I lost you? Alas, I am so sorrowful; who has taken you from me? O noble creature, where have you gone? I believe you are sorrowing because of it, but my life is inconsolable."

Then, sorrowing greatly, he got back on his horse and rode slowly through the wilderness of Gargalco, weeping constantly, and speaking this lament:

"I despair of myself, alas! and I summon death,
Since I have lost my sweet comfort,

The new blown rose, plucked in the delightful garden,
The one I long for always in my heart.

O leafy date tree, palm of gleaming paradise,
You for whom the angels make delightful songs,
God formed you with his hands,
And surely in you is planted the savory apple.

Angelic creature
Because of you I find no rest, day nor night nor any hour. . . ."

As Tristano rode thus crying and lamenting, he could feel nothing except his great sorrow. Then he encountered two knights errant; one was Chieso the Seneschal, the other Dodinello the Savage. Sir Chieso challenged Tristano to joust, but because of his sorrow Tristano neither saw him nor heard. Then Chieso attacked him, and struck him on the shield so hard that he sent horse and rider to earth. Tristano was very sorry about that, saying, "By my faith, Sir Chieso, it was a great villainy for you to strike me like that."

Sir Chieso, who recognized Tristano by his voice, was the saddest knight in the world; weeping, he knelt before Sir Tristano and begged his forgiveness. Tristano, who at that point cared for nothing, pardoned him, and asked that, if he should encounter Sir Lancilotto, he would tell him what had happened, and that he "was never so happy as I am now so sorrowful and sad."

Then they parted, and Tristano rode on, wandering to a spring where he dismounted to rest. When he had been there a little while, along came a knight errant who challenged him to a joust, but Tristano replied that he had no desire to fight, for he had lost all strength and power. The knight, who bore a vermilion shield, was Sir Astore di Mare. He said to Tristano, "What, sir! Are you not a knight errant, and daring?"

"By my faith," answered Tristano, "I am the most unfortunate knight in the world."

"Where are you from?" asked Astore; and Tristano replied that he was from the kingdom of Cornovaglia. Then Astore, out of meanness and scorn, took Tristano's shield from the tree where it was hanging and threw it in the pool, saying that he did so to spite King Marco and his entire country.

Then Tristano said, "Knight, you have done a great villainy. But I ask only that you take the shield out of the spring and hang it back where it was: that way my shame will be amended."

But the knight paid no attention to those words; he rode away joking and laughing the loudest laugh in the world. Then Tristano went to the spring, pulled his shield out, and bound it on his arm. He mounted and rode after Sir Astore, calling, "Knight, now you can have your joust, if you like, since you wanted it so much."

Astore, still laughing, turned his horse around, and they rode at each other, exchanging two great blows. Astore broke his lance on Tristano, but Tristano struck him with such force that he sent him flying a lance's length before he fell to the ground. Then Tristano dismounted, tore Sir Astore's shield from his arm, and threw it in the pool to pay back for his own, then he went on his way.

CXXIV.

All that day Tristano rode on, heavy-hearted and always weeping. Then he met a damsel riding in great haste; she also was weeping bitterly, and she carried in her hand a short lance with a very sharp blade. Tristano asked her why she was weeping, and what lance was that she carried, and the damsel said, "My lady the Fata Morgana has sent me to the kingdom of Cornovaglia to present this lance, on her behalf, to King Marco. He is to carry it when he hunts, for he may be sure that with it he will be able to kill the beast that frightens all other beasts, and this death will be remembered as long as the world shall last. Know, knight, that this was the weapon that killed Onesun, my master, and it is this sharp blade that will avenge his death."

Fata Morgana, through her magic powers, knew that Tristano would die by that weapon, but to be sure that he would not escape it, she had enchanted and poisoned it in such a way that whoever it wounded could never be healed. Tristano heard the damsel, but paid little attention to what she said; still he began to wonder about this friendship between King Marco and Fata Morgana, marvelling greatly that it should be.

All at once, here came Breus sanza Pietà, looking for the damsel who was speaking with Tristano, meaning to ravish her. As he approached, he shouted at Tristano, "Sir Knight, have you taken this woman under your protection?" Tristano said yes. "Then I challenge you," cried Breus. "We must joust."

Then they rode against each other, but Tristano struck Breus such a blow that he sent him unconscious to the ground. At that point, they were joined by Astore di Mare, who said, "Knight, you told me you came from Cornovaglia, but your prowess argues otherwise."

Tristano made no reply to this, but went to the damsel and said, "Lady, you are free of all this." And she thanked him warmly and went on her way.

When Breus had remounted, he rode up to Tristano, saying, "Sir Knight, I beg that you will come and rest at a fortress of mine; it is nearby."

Tristano, because the hour was late, accepted, and then Breus also invited Sir Astore di Mare. Know that Breus was a knight errant, nephew of the king of Normelanda. He lived in this fortress because it was in a wilderness, and he did not get on well with other knights. He was the most envious and the cruelest knight in the world, and he had a wife whom, out of jealousy, he would let no one see. He was never courteous.

His lady was called Galiena. At that time she was thirty years old, but she looked forty because of all the troubles he gave her. He let neither knights or young boys serve in his court, only maidservants and young girls, and he hated all knights who were lovers for fear they might desire his wife. He said that all women were evil, and that his was worse than any other.

As the three knights rode on they went by a lovely tower which was all painted and decorated. At the window was a graceful, most beautiful maiden who was playing a viola and singing a song. It was a song that Tristano had made for the beautiful Isotta the Blonde when first they knew each other in love on board the ship, and it said this:

> "Love, whoever serves you is nobly rewarded;
> Whoever loves deserves good will,
> And has no doubt in himself, nor fear,
> Nor any impediment.
> You are such a noble lord,
> Noble above all other delights."

Then she sang another song, one which Tristano had made when Isotta was taken by King Marco from the tower of the Wise Damsel. The song said:

> "My sweet love,
> Gentle rose, angelic face,
> You are the flower above all others
> Like God is above all creatures.
> Have mercy, my lady, upon your servant
> Who has lost such a noble face;
> Sweet queen, you are gone,
> And my life is inconsolable."

Tristano, when he heard these words he had first spoken for the one he could not now see, swooned over his saddlebow and heaved a great sigh, saying, "Alas, Lord God, how that woman's singing renews my heavy grief."

Breus said, "Knight, think nothing of that woman's evil words, for she is a lady of little goodness. Sir Calvano put her there to spite me."

Riding on, the knights came to Breus's fortress, where they found the gate locked tight. When he called out, two damsels opened it and lowered the

bridge, then Breus commanded his whole household not to reveal his name, and to tell no one that he had a wife.

When Tristano and Astore had disarmed they recognized each other, and each honored the other greatly. At once there came two damsels with water and silken towels; they had the two knights wash their face and hands, for they were all covered with sweat and battle stains, and then they brought them two rich silken robes.

This was the first courteous act Breus had ever done in this world, and he did it because when Sir Tristano had beaten him and his horse had tried to run away, Tristano had captured it and brought it back to him. It is very true, as the proverb says, that the courtesy of a courteous man does much to cure a villain of his villainy, for it is said that goodness is as goodness does.

Then Breus joined the other two knights and asked their names. Astore replied, "Kind host, you may not know the name of this knight yet, but I am called Sir Astore di Mare."

When Breus heard that this was Astore, his mortal enemy, he flushed angrily, and left them with bad intentions. He told one of his nieces that the second knight was Astore di Mare, who had once held him in prison more than six months. He said, "If I didn't have that other knight to worry about, I would gladly be avenged on him."

Then the maiden took a harp and went in to join the two knights. After she had played a while, Tristano took the harp and played so elegantly it was a marvel to hear. When he had played a little, he turned to Sir Astore, saying, "The day I heard the sad news about Gioiosa Guardia, and was resting there beside the fountain where you found me, I made a sonnet about my heavy sorrow. Now I want to sing it for you." Then he began again to play, singing:

"It was yet the time when I was with my lady
In happiness, delight and sport,
Asking for no other joy, desiring no rest
From gazing at her bright face:

Then in a cruel moment I left her in such a way
That I have never felt such awful torment.
Those who have been in hell for a century
Feel less pain than I do in every way.

Alas, lord Cristo, why did I leave?
Why did you let such a thing happen?
I might have stayed with my own true love!

Then she might not have been taken and hidden from me.
Now is the time that I cry for sorrow:
Gentle queen, you have given me such a blow."

When Tristano had finished his song the maiden said, "Knight, I have never seen you before, but hearing you sing, I say that you are Tristano of Cornovaglia, he who first made that song."

Tristano replied, "Lady, I am truly that Tristano, in whom all happiness is dead."

Then the maiden turned to Breus and told him that the younger knight was Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia: "Be careful, therefore, not to anger him."

Then Breus approached the two knights, and Tristano said, "Kind host, for courtesy's sake, tell me your name."

Breus replied, "I will not tell you now, but I will tell you before you leave here."

At that, water was brought to wash their hands; they sat to eat, and were courteously served. When they had eaten, they washed their hands again, then the tables were removed and the two knights were led into a rich chamber in which two luxurious beds had been prepared. Here they rested the night.

In the morning when they arose, they armed themselves and mounted. Then Breus armed himself and mounted, too, and seemed to be planning to go with them. When the two knights were outside, though, Breus raised the bridge and set a barrier across the gate. Then Tristano turned toward him, saying, "Kind host, won't you ride with us?"

Breus answered, "I would rather stay inside."

Tristano said, "That is all right with me, but please tell me your name."

And their host answered, "Know that I am called Breus sanza Pietà." And when he had said that, he barred the gate again.

Tristano said, "Knight, God save you, why are you doing that?"

And Breus replied, "Because I do not want you ever to enter here again. You are my mortal enemies."

Tristano asked, "How am I your enemy?"

And Breus said, "By my faith, all knights in love are my enemies. I don't trust them. I believe if you had seen my wife you would gladly have shamed me with her."

"By my faith," said Tristano, "I would do no such thing."

"Alas, by evil fortune," said Breus, "How can a man trust what you say, you who have so often taken Queen Isotta from King Marco? And Lancilotto, the brother of that traitor there with you, has done the same to King Artù, and it wasn't long ago that Sir Calvano stole the Gaia Donzella from Fata Morgana. You all behave thus, caring nothing for the honor of others, if only you can have your way."

Then Astore said, "Breus, the knight who is not trustworthy himself cannot trust others. Because you know you are faithless, you believe we are disloyal like you."

Breus answered, "Astore, don't thank me that you are safe; rather thank

your good companion, for by my faith, you will not find Sir Breus so courteous another time."

Tristano said, "Breus, whoever you blame, don't praise me, for I was never anywhere that I found such courtesy, or where I was so gently served as I was here."

"Don't get curdled," said Breus, "for the courtesy I've shown you will cost those I'm not afraid of dear. It would be bad luck if all my enemies were stronger than I am. And I can console myself for the honor I've done you with the love that you bear my cousin Dinadano. But it weighs heavily on me that this other traitor must escape out of my hands, for I have never loved Astore or his kin."

Then their talk ended, and the two knights left Breus's fortress and began to ride along their way.

CXXV.

In this part the story tells that as Sir Tristano and Astore di Mare rode on, they went through the kingdom of Norgales. One day they came to a lovely spring, beside which a rich pavilion had been set up. Here dwelt Sir Trasino, son of the king of Norgales, and here he had a beautiful lady whom he loved very much. He had also in his company a bold knight known as Sir Ales, his first cousin.

When they saw the two knights approaching they challenged them to joust; Sir Tristano defeated Sir Ales, but Sir Trasino overcame Sir Astore and wounded him. After that, Tristano and Trasino began to joust, riding toward each other. At the lowering of the lances, each gave the other a great blow, and Sir Tristano knocked Trasino to the ground, seriously wounded.

Then Tristano and Astore rode on, even though Astore had to go in great pain, for he had lost much blood from his wound. As they rode thus, they encountered a damsel on horseback, and she came toward them weeping bitterly. Her dress was in tatters around her belt, so that it seemed all dishevelled, and her body was all uncovered from the waist down.

Tristano asked her why she wept so bitterly, and she told him she was a messenger from the Dama del Lago, and on her behalf had been bringing a shield to Sir Lancilotto: "But when I came to the wilderness I met a knight who said he was called Breus sanza Pietà, and when he saw me, he demanded the shield I was carrying. I told him I was taking it to Sir Lancilotto,

but he took it away from me and trampled it under his horse's feet, and then to shame us more he cut my robe as you see, and made me swear that I would put on no other until I had spoken to Lancilotto, and told him all that had been done to spite him."

Then Tristano told the damsel his name, and swore that if he could find Breus, he would kill him. At that, they took leave of each other, and Tristano and Astore rode on through the wild forest around the foot of the wilderness fortress where Lucano the Great had lived, he whom Tristano had killed. Then they came to the house of a widowed lady where Lancilotto and his kinsmen were always welcome. When the widow recognized Astore she did him great honor, and took him in to treat his wound. Since Tristano could not wait so long, he took leave and went on his way.

That same evening Sir Lancilotto arrived, and Sir Astore told him how he had just parted from Tristano, who had gone in search of Breus. He told him about the damsel they had met, and what Breus had done to her to spite him. Then Lancilotto swore not to retun to Camellotto until he had found Breus and put him to death.

When morning came Lancilotto got on his horse and rode through the great wilderness looking for Breus. He encountered him in the deepest valley of the wasteland; when he saw him he recognized him by the insignia Astore had described. Breus, who did not recognize Lancilotto, challenged him to joust, but Lancilotto, for his own purpose, prepared no defense; rather he let fall his lance, like a knight who refuses the challenge.

Then Breus struck him a hard blow on his shield, and Lancilotto, to be sure that this was Breus, said, "Knight, don't hit me, and I will tell you some marvellous news."

"What news will you tell me," asked Breus.

And Lancilotto said, "By my faith, this morning I met a damsel whose robes were all torn so that her body showed bare, and it was the most shameful thing in the world to see."

And Breus said, "Knight, for courtesy's sake, the news you have told me won't keep me from killing you. And I tell you I believe you completely, because with my own hands I did the deed you describe."

Now Lancilotto, sure that this was indeed Breus, rode up beside him and grasped the noseguard of his helmet, and told him that he was Lancilotto. When Breus saw what a situation he was in, he knew he was as good as dead. Most humbly he cried for pardon, but his prayers were useless. Lancilotto struck him so hard on his helmet and shoulders with his sword that he sent him dead to the ground. Then he took his jacket and insignia and put them on, so that he could get inside Breus's fortress and see if any knights and ladies were imprisoned there.

As Lancilotto rode on, wearing Breus's insignia, he came to Merlino's stone, in which words had been carved, saying, "Prophecy of truth in place of ig-

norance. When one brave and another bold arrive here in false skin they will kill each other. Then the third sorceress will be shown false in her prophesy, if by the second astrology it is not restored, the principal cause of evil coming in false clothing, through the aid and interference of good."

CXXVI.

The masters of the story have written that when Merlino prophesied the formation of the Tavola Ritonda, he erected in the world six principal stones. The first was in Liones, and on it was written, "Here will gather the three knights of the wild beast." The second was in Cornovaglia, where the first battle between Lancilotto and Tristano occurred. The third was in Longres, the one in which the sword and the lance were fixed, while the fourth was in the Valle Perigliosa, and it said, "Trespassing Knights." The fifth was in the Valle Scura, in the place where Tristano fought with Lancilotto, thinking that he was Palamidesso. The sixth was this one, to which Lancilotto had just come, in Norgales.

And know that as Lancilotto rested here at the sixth stone Sir Tristano arrived. When he saw Lancilotto wearing Breus's insignia, he truly believed that this was Breus, so he challenged him to joust. Lancilotto did not refuse, so they rode against each other and began to strike vigorously, exchanging two blows on their shields so great that they brought the horses to their knees and shattered both lances to bits. And the knights did not pause; they grasped their swords and began a dangerous battle, dealing such great blows that in a short time their arms were bent and damaged and their mail shirts were all broken, and both of them were wounded in many places. Their blood could be seen covering the ground.

The two knights were reluctant to ask for respite, since each of them thought he was better than the other, and their battle lasted so long that the horses were exhausted. Then they dismounted, intending to finish the fight on foot.

The battle was so fierce that they both would have died if they had fought any longer, but as they fought thus, here came the damsel that Breus had treated so villainously. She recognized Tristano by the insignia he had worn when he swore to avenge her, so she believed that he was fighting with Breus and she was very glad of it. And because it appeared that Tristano was getting the best of the battle, she came forward, saying, "Ah, Sir Tristano, may God comfort you, and may you vindicate my shame against this traitor!"

Hearing this, Lancilotto marvelled greatly, then he remembered he was

wearing Breus's insignia, so he said to his opponent, "Knight, are you Tristano?"

"Yes, I am," said Tristano, "And I am he by whose hand you must die because of the great villainy you have done this lady."

Then Lancilotto threw off Breus's garment and revealed his own, and took off his helmet, saying to Tristano, "Here is your Lancilotto." Then he told them how he had put Breus to death.

Then they honored each other greatly, and the damsel Onia was very happy about it. They rode back toward the widow's dwelling, where they were treated for their wounds. But Tristano was still always melancholy, and Lancilotto had to comfort him over and over, saying, "Do you know, Tristano, why loyal lovers are always sad and melancholy?"

"Yes, I know," said Tristano. "Don't think I don't."

And Lancilotto said, "I believe it is because the lover does not have the thing he loves, and he is melancholy because he does not believe he will ever have it. But if he does have it, he lives in fear of losing it, and thus he is still melancholy."

Tristano said, "Lancilotto, you speak the truth. But the third reason that the lover is so preoccupied is that his heart is so full of high thoughts that all of his other virtues draw back into themselves, and all his other parts are left sorrowful because they have lost their lord, that is, the heart. At least this is understood by those who love with a loyal love, but not by those who just go around talking about it."

Tristano stayed on for ten days, then took leave of Lancilotto and Astore and began to ride toward the kingdom of Cornovaglia. As he rode, on the third day he came to a palace all painted and decorated. When he went inside he found no one there, only a table all laden with food, so he sat down and ate his fill. As he was eating, out of the next room came a serpent, the biggest in the world and the most terrible to see. As it came toward Tristano, he pulled out his sword and fought with it, putting it to death; thus he delivered out of prison the damsel Rima, whom the serpent had kept for its delight.

Then Tristano rode to the sea shore, and as he came to a port he met a knight errant called Sir Sagramore of the Desert. Tristano showed him great affection, and honored him greatly, begging that he come with him. They took a boat and entered the high seas, and soon came to the kingdom of Cornovaglia.

Then Tristano and Sagramore mounted and rode to the castle of Dinasso the seneschal, where they were received with great honor. The two knights stayed at this castle while Tristano made known his return to the queen; because of it she became the happiest lady in the world. She had been in great torment, lamenting him day and night, because she did not think she would ever see him again.

Then she managed it so that Tristano could come to her disguised as a maiden, and when they were together, they were the happiest lovers in the world, forgetting all their past sorrows. Secretly they stayed together four days in great delight, making up for the time they had lost. When the fifth night came, Tristano dreamed that a naked maiden with a garland of flowers on her head took him by the hand and led him before the Lady Logista. The lady was inside a great church, and she said to Tristano, "Rest here."

But it seemed to Tristano that Isotta would not let him rest until he had embraced her, and then the two of them seemed content. On that same night Isotta dreamed that King Marco dug her heart out of her body, and Tristano comforted her. When the two lovers got up, each told what he had dreamed, but so great was their delight in each other that they paid little heed.

But according to the true book belonging to Sir Gaddo, the visions of the two lovers were accurate, because a naked maiden, that is, love, led Tristano to his death, and the Lady Logista, or Fata Morgana, was the cause of that death, because she had found out through her magic arts that King Marco could kill Tristano with the same blade Tristano had used to kill her lover, Onesun. Then she had poisoned the blade with such a poison that no one wounded by it could ever be cured, and sent it to King Marco, to avenge his shame. And where it showed that Isotta would not let Tristano rest, that meant that Tristano had greater sorrow to leave Isotta behind him than he had for the death he saw approaching. The lance with which the king wounded Tristano thus drew the heart out of Isotta's body, so much was the suffering and sorrow it caused.

CXXVII.

When the night passed and daylight dawned, Tristano and Isotta were still happy. They played chess, singing in whispers a song that Isotta made up right then for her love, and the song said this:

"Since I have seen you again, O my life,
All other joys I hold as nothing;
For I could find no rest, neither by night nor by day,
Truly I never had peace,
Because I could not see you, O my soul.

Now that I see you my heart is delighted
More than ever it was, O beloved face,
You who turn night into day–
Only you are my life and hope and delight and peace."

And so the two lovers sang and played and were full of joy, until evil fortune would have it that Adriette, King Marco's nephew, passed by. When he heard their singing he recognized Tristano's voice, then he ran to King Marco to tell him the news. King Marco lept up like a madman, and with no other plan he reached for the short lance the sorceress had sent him and went toward Isotta's chamber. Looking through a barred window, he saw Tristano, dressed in a silken tunic, bending over the game he was playing with Isotta, who seemed so happy to be with him. Then, out of spite, the king threw the spear, wounding him in the left side; then he fled for fear that Tristano would see him.

Here one could say, "O dolorous stroke, stroke without pity, full of sadness and cruelty, to do so much harm!" When Tristano felt that he was wounded he also knew the stroke was mortal, and with great sorrow and many sighs he took leave of the sad and miserable Queen Isotta, rode back to Dinasso's castle, and went to bed. Many doctors came to him, but none of them could provide relief, so deadly was the wound.

Know that the blow King Marco dealt Tristano was mortal and dangerous and full of harm, and this is proved by five results. The first is that Tristano was such a young knight when he died, for on the day he was wounded he had lived thirty-three years, two months and thirteen days; after he was hurt he lived nineteen more days. The masters of the story say that if he had lived ten years more, by his own choice he would no longer have born arms, for if he had, all other knights would no longer go out to seek adventure, they would be so afraid of him. Further, Tristano was the flower of all the loveliness and honor of courtesy and the prize of knighthood. At his death, the Tavola Ritonda was weakened because King Artù, having suffered the great losses of the quest, hoped and believed he could rebuild and maintain the table through the prowess of Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto. But after Tristano's death King Artù himself lost vigor and power, and was never again so eager or so bold.

Also, because of Tristano's death the beautiful, gentle, delightful Isotta died, she who was lovelier than anyone else in the world. And the fifth reason why Tristano's death was such a great loss was that he was such a faithful lover; he practiced love loyally, and wisely he kept its laws.

Know that when King Marco found out that Tristano was so gravely wounded, he was glad of it, but when he heard for sure that Tristano was dying, his heart softened, and he was the saddest king in the world. Queen Isotta was the saddest lady ever born, and desired only that the king put

her to death. She went before the king and the other barons, saying, "Let my love die whenever he will, because the day that he does I will go with him. If neither the king nor my sorrow will kill me, I will kill myself, because we two have led one life, and it is fitting that we die one death." And she refused to eat or drink, for as illness consumes the sufferer, so great sorrow consumed Queen Isotta.

When Tristano saw that he could not escape death, he sent for Dinasso and sent him to King Marco, asking that he come to talk with him. Then Dinasso took the message to court, and the king, with many tears, hung his head. For a long time he remained thus bowed, then he mounted a horse and with many barons went to speak with Tristano his nephew. When he entered the room he found Tristano weeping bitterly, like one who was dying against his will. Seeing the king, Tristano said to him, "Dear uncle, you are welcome to this sad celebration of mine, which you have so often wished for. Now you have accomplished your joy, for soon you will see your Tristano dead. Fortunately, you will not repent of it yet. Since the thing has happened, it could not be otherwise. Therefore I pardon you and pray that you will pardon me for any offense that I have given you."

And the lamenting king pardoned him, saying, "My noble nephew, are you truly so sick that death must have you?"

"Yes, I am," said Tristano. "You see how wasted my arms are, these arms that have done such deeds that wrong might not be done to others. Only one thing do I ask of you, my sweet uncle: that you grant me the boon I desire. I tell you that this will be the last boon your Tristano might ever ask of you."

And the king said, "O my dear nephew, strength of my kingdom and defender of my crown, ask boldly for anything that might please you now!"

"I ask for courtesy's sake that you have Queen Isotta brought here," Tristano replied, "So that she will be with me when I die."

The king sent a dozen barons to bring her at once, and Isotta came weeping, praying to God that he would do one of two things, either kill her or spare Tristano, for no man was ever so eager for vengeance as she was for death. Tristano, seeing Isotta so sad, suffered greater pain than the pain of death, and grieved so inside himself that the blood which had been flowing continuously from the wound was constricted in his heart, giving him new force and endurance. By this force, the book tells us, he lived three hours more, and suffered more than if death had come sooner.

Know that he could barely hear the laments of Queen Isotta, so weakened he was, and the more he consumed himself within, the less there showed ouside the little steadiness that remained to him. Looking at Isotta, he said, "Welcome, my beloved hope. You have come too late to heal me. I tell you that you will soon see the death of your Tristano, who has loved you so much in this world."

And the queen cried, "O my dearest hope, are you so badly hurt that you must die?" And when she had spoken those words she fell to the ground senseless, in such distress that she could no longer speak.

CXXVIII.

But when the day finally came on which Tristano could live no longer, he began to sigh deeply, saying, "Alas, Lord God, heavenly father, have pity and mercy on my soul and do not abandon me in my great need. Deal with me not according to my transgressions, but rather according to your great mercy. My youth in this world tempted me greatly and I, like a sinner, used it shamefully. Therefore for charity's sake, it is with pity, faith, and hope that I turn to you who, in your great power, goodness, and wisdom, and through your incarnation, birth, and passion, and for the love you bore your most holy mother the Virgin Maria, will hear me. I beg you humbly that the abundance of your precious blood be price and payment for my sins, and if you will, accept me as one of your elect in Paradise."

When Tristano had made this holy prayer and confessed himself to Cristo the almighty, he summoned a holy archbishop, and other holy bishops, abbots, and hermits who came to him from many lands. Devoutly he confessed himself to them and did all that a faithful Christian ought to do.

After a time, Tristano summoned Sagramore, and asked that he display before him his own shield, helmet, and unsheathed sword, and Sagramore did so. Then Tristano gazed at them tenderly, saying, "O my dear sword, today is the day you must part from me and I from you. Here you must take leave of honor, for I do not believe you will come into the hands of any knight who will ever again hold you so dear, or through whom you will be so feared."

Then he turned to Sagramore, saying, "Alas, my dear, sweet friend Sagramore, I beg that after my death you will present all of my arms to King Artù and Sir Lancilotto, in place of my body."

Sagramore, weeping, promised that he would. After that, Tristano spoke the words of defeat, words which he had never before spoken in his life. He said, "I surrender. I am defeated. I can no longer defend myself because cruel death has no pity on me. O courteous Palamidesso, today our feud is over. O bold Lancilotto, today we are no longer companions."

When he had said this, he was silent, but know that the words he spoke

were cowardly, that is, when he said, "I surrender. I am defeated. I can no longer defend myself." Because, while he lived in this world, never did he once out of fear say, "I am conquered." And he had completed more jousts and battles between the ages of fifteen and thirty-three than any other knight did in eighty years. Thus those words sounded strange, since they were spoken by one who had never said them before, and they were shameful words, because the decision of kings, counts, and barons was that Tristano was certainly the best knight in the world. If you searched among the best, the finest, the most approved, Tristano was first.

However, there were and are four opinions, for those of you who are interested to hear them, and those four opinions are in the wellspring of all the books and romances that are read. This book belonged first to Sir Piero, Count of Savoia, and was copied from one belonging to the King of Francia. Now it belongs to Sir Gaddo de' Lanfranchi of Pisa. The book has this to say about the four opinions held: some say the knights of the Tavola Vecchia were the boldest in the world, and some say Sir Lancilotto, and some say Sir Galasso, while others affirm that it was Sir Tristano. The book does not choose among these opinions, but says this: "It is written that Tristano fought with knights of the Tavola Vecchia in the Valle Bruna and the Valle Franca, and suffered no dishonor. By force of arms he put to death Sir Brunoro the Brown who was the flower of the Tavola Vecchia, and he killed many giants who were of that same era."

The second opinion was that Sir Lancilotto was the best knight in the world and equal to Sir Tristano, but in our book we do not find a single joust in which Lancilotto has the advantage over Tristano, but rather Tristano always has it over Lancilotto. Nor, whenever they fought with swords, was it Tristano who asked for respite, no matter how long the encounter might last.

The third opinion is that Sir Galasso was the best knight in the world, and one book affirms this, saying about him, "He was the best by far in grace, virtue, and the prowess which proceeds from the Holy Spirit. I do not say in secular prowess, which comes from boldness of heart."

For know that Galasso had in himself a grace more than that of any other knight, and it was through grace that he was called the best knight in the world, and through grace that he conquered in battle. Therefore he is not counted among the knights who fought for the love of ladies and maidens.

We have an example in King Davidde the Prophet, for after he was pardoned for his sins and had God's grace, he was a victor and routed the Pharaoh who had thirty times as many people as he. Therefore the apostle spoke well when he said that no one could stand against God.

Therefore our book does set down the decision that Sir Tristano was the best worldly knight and the boldest that nature ever formed, and this is the fourth opinion. I believe if he had lived as long as other knights usually

did, he would have made all sorts of people afraid of him. I will give a little example of this: for we ought to know that here could be no great or strong battle that did not last a long time, and there was no long battle in which Tristano entered that he was not the winner. In this he showed that he was a bold and wise fighter, the most vigorous, bravest, noblest, most courteous, handsome, and loyal knight who ever belted on a sword. Because of his virtue, his death was a great blow.

CXXIX.

Now goes the tale, now tells the sad story that when the loyal Sir Tristano had relinquished his arms and acknowledged that he was beaten, he turned to the weeping queen, then began to gaze at her very tenderly. He held her by the sides of her dear, lovable face, the face he had so much loved in this world, and then he said, "O gentle queen, my sweet lady, love of my heart and my loyal comforter, the time has come when your Tristano can no longer live. How will it be with you after I am gone? Can you let me leave you this way? Will you not come with me, so that our souls might be together in the other world? For I have faith and hope in God, that he will have mercy on our sins."

The queen, hearing Tristano's sweet words, fainted from the sorrow, so that no one could find in her pulse nor vein. Her rosy face was pale and shadowed and grieved, as if nothing could comfort her. As she came to herself, she was heard to say, very softly, "Tristano, my love, my life is nothing without you. I pray that you will not leave me behind as a mourner who because of you is nearly dead. I desire death, since life has abandoned you. Death would be life to me, if I might be in your beloved company."

At that point, Tristano turned to King Marco, saying, "Sire, now I am no longer that Tristano who gave you so much trouble, for today the great feud between you and me will end because of that one blow you gave me. But what is done cannot be otherwise, and I pardon you that God may pardon me for all my sins."

Turning around, he asked pardon of all the others, saying, "My lords, may God be with you; please pray for my soul." Then he said, "O cruel sorrow, worse than all others! For the one who goes feels half the sorrow for leaving that he feels for what he leaves behind."

At that point Tristano turned to Queen Isotta and said, "My sweet lady,

may it please you to die with me and keep me company, so that neither of us will have to mourn for the other."

And Isotta replied, "Tristano, my sweet love, I will do it gladly. You must not go without me, for I am already near death, so weakened is my life within me."

Tristano, knowing how unwillingly she would stay after him said then, "O sweet queen, embrace me now that I may die in your dear arms, for as long as I am with you, I will feel no pain."

Then the beautiful Isotta, the courteous queen, that gentle lady, embraced Sir Tristano. And Tristano said, "Now I care no more for death, and sorrow is all gone, since I am with my sweet lady."

As they were together like that, embracing so, each one was content to die with the other. At that point, not because of the embrace or any other outside force, but from physical weakness and their own sorrow, and with each of them feeling only pleasure and delight, the two loyal lovers bid farewell to this life, and together their two souls left their bodies.

According to our book, it is true that the queeen died a little before Tristano, just a fraction of time, and Tristano died after her. Therefore we can truthfully say that Isotta died because she saw Tristano her lover die, and Tristano died because he felt the death of his own hope, Isotta. For according to the master of stories, Tristano would have lived an hour or so longer if it had not been that his sorrow at the death of Isotta so constricted his heart and what heat and sustenance remained therein, that he lost all comfort of nature, occasion, and fortune.

CXXX.

Thus embracing and face to face the two loyal lovers died, they who had loved each other so much in this uncertain world, and who were so loyal that while they lived never were they false to their love. Know now that most of the people in that room thought that they had fainted, but when they saw clearly that the two lovers had passed from this life, they began to make the greatest lament in the world. Each baron and knight made his own lament, and King Marco made the most painful and piteous complaint that had ever been made by any man in the world, saying, "Alas, my noble nephew, why have you thus abandoned me? O precious queen, where have you gone? O darkened kingdom, who will protect you? O knights and ladies, who will bring you respect?"

At that, the king sent letters and messengers throughout every country to kings, counts, marquises, barons, captains, knights, vavasors, and all other kinds of people, to make known to them the great loss that had occurred. When they heard the news, every nobleman made his own lament, and bewailed the great loss, because every nobleman who had wanted to live according to justice was supported by Sir Tristano. Other knights, who might have wanted to take someone or some city or castle by force, kept such desires to themselves and did not act on them out of fear of Sir Tristano, for he was the champion and defender of justice and truth. His equal has never been found in five things: that is, in prowess, courtesy, nobility, loyalty, and beauty.

Then King Marco had the two bodies embalmed, and kept them on view twelve days before having them buried. The great barons gathered at the castle of Dinasso, continually lamenting the death of the two loyal lovers. Afterwards, their two bodies were taken to the city of Tintoile, to the great church of St. Tommaso. When all the people had assembled in the great church, the king had a most noble monument set before the door. It was all inlaid with gold and silver and precious stones, and in that rich sepulchre the king had the two bodies laid to rest. He ordered two golden images carved, one of Sir Tristano and the other of the beautiful Queen Isotta. The images were exactly like them, and looked as if they were alive.

The image of the lovely queen held a flower in its hand, to show that this was Isotta, flower of all others in the land, and Tristano's statue held a sword to show that he, through his prowess, had set the kingdom free. At their feet letters were carved which told the story of their life, how they had died in the year 368, and how Tristano had been born in 333, and Isotta in 337.

Know that love never again lasted so nobly and so loyally between two lovers as it did between those two, for they had in themselves the seven qualities that make the perfect lover. In them was loyalty with no deceit, for after they knew each other in love neither ever knew another for delight or for love; their love was gentle, without arrogance or pride; never was there a quarrel between them; and it was a delighting love, for what pleased one always gave joy to the other. It was a courteous love, without villainy, for never did an unruly word come between them. It was a love without vanity, discretely and wisely practiced; it was an honest love, without dissimulation, for neither one would ever blame the other; and it was a constant love, without discord, and with no heed to consequences. Finally, it was an enduring love, and lasted until their deaths.

CXXXI.

The true story tells, and many people have affirmed it, that a year later to the very day that Tristano and Isotta were buried, out of their grave grew a vine which had two roots, one of which had its start in the heart of Tristano, and the other came out of Isotta's heart. The two roots formed one bole which was full of flowers and leaves, and which grew up out of the grave, making deep shade over the images of the two lovers. Grapes grew on the vine in three stages, that is, in flower, green, and ripe, to show that in the two loyal lovers were three natures, for they were the flowers of beauty, courtesy, and nobleness; they were green and bitter in that they endured many sorrows; and they were mature and sweet in that, in their delight in each other, they cared nothing for their troubles. And the plant was a grapevine to show that as vines bear fruit that bring rapture to all mankind, so the life of Tristano and Isotta was a tree of love which long afterward comforted and inspired all courtly lovers.

But after the two loyal lovers had been buried, and the greatest lament in the world had been made for them, King Marco said, "Alas, Tristano, my noble nephew, how many are there who have not challenged my rule only for fear of you? When the king of Irlanda finds out you are dead he will want us to pay him tribute as we did in the past, and when King Artù and King Governale of Liones and Sir Lancilotto and the other knights errant find out, they will take vengeance on me and on my kingdom.

"O my noble nephew, how my sad heart longs for you! For I know that just as you delivered my kingdom and brought it out of slavery, so by your death will it be destroyed and its people scattered. Friends and enemies alike will take vengeance on me, blaming me for such a great loss."

The mourning lasted thirty days, with all the barons seated in front of the great church from matins until the hour of tierce and from nones until the hour of vespers with their hoods pulled down over their eyes. The vavasors and the townsmen were all dishevelled, and ate always without napkins. The barons and knights wore black robes for a year, and so did the maidens and other good people, and the mourning lasted all that year. These were the first black robes there ever were in the world; King Marco also and all the ladies of high lineage dressed themselves in black for love of good Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta.

CXXXII.

When the two lovers died, Sir Sagramore did not linger, but took Tristano's shield, helmet, and sword and rode day after day, past hills and fields and forests, until he came to the city of Camellotto. There he met a knight errant who was Chieso the Seneschal. Sagramore asked for news of King Artù and the court, and Sir Chieso said, "By my faith, Sir Sagramore, there is too much bad news at King Artù's court, and all are lamenting and greatly complaining because Sir Bordo the Chaste has just returned, bringing news of the deaths of King Bando of Magus and Meliagans his son, of King Peles Peschaor, and Sir Galasso and the noble Prezzivale, of Sir Arecco, Grausin, Sagris, Gulistante, and many other bold knights of the Tavola Ritonda."

Know that many good knights had died while they were out on the high quest, because they had stayed out adventuring for so long, and had suffered from great cold and great heat. When Sir Sagramore heard this, he was very sad, saying, "Sir Chieso, this news is terrible, but I bring worse. The best knight in the world has just died, the boldest, noblest, and most beautiful and most courteous, he through whom the Tavola Ritonda was most feared and honored—that is, Sir Tristano of Liones. And the lovely queen Isotta died in his arms."

Then Sir Chieso began a loud lament, and both of them were weeping. Sir Sagramore rode on until he came before King Artù, and when the king saw him, he asked what country he had just come from. Sir Sagramore said, "I come from the kingdom of Cornovaglia."

Then the king asked, "What news do you bring me, Sir Sagramore, of my good Sir Tristano? Has he returned from this dolorous quest?"

"By my faith, my lord king," said Sir Sagramore, "the news that I bring is not what you and your knights want to hear. But gather your barons and knights, and I will tell you."

At that, King Artù had a bell sounded, one that was used only to announce great news, and all the knights and barons came to the palace where Queen Ginevara and many ladies also gathered. When all of the people were assembled, Sir Sagramore got to his feet and threw back his long cloak, revealing a black cassock. He said, "My lords, I have just come from the kingdom of Cornovaglia, and the news that I bring you is bitter and bad, the worst that could possibly be told, first for King Artù and all the knights errant,

then for all other knights and barons. The worthy and noble and courteous Sir Tristano has died by the hand of King Marco, and with him, in his arms, died the beautiful Isotta. The two of them died in one moment, and they are buried in a monument. Tristano begged me at his death that, in place of his body, I present you with all of his arms, so that you will remember him and pray to God for his soul."

CXXXIII.

The masters of the story say that when King Artù and the other barons heard the mortal news they bowed their heads and almost lost their senses for sorrow, making the greatest lament ever made in the world. Then Lancilotto rose, speaking first, and said in a loud voice, "Today the world has ended, for how might it last any longer without its fountain of prowess, and without the honor and champion of all its chivalry? Alas, Tristano, what sorrow you have brought me! Never again in my life will I be happy!"

And King Artù said, "Now is the time to let go all joy; everyone should weep and lament for the great loss we have suffered in the death of Tristano. Now I will see the Tavola Ritonda deserted and destroyed. Alas, false dream, how you have destroyed me! For I hoped to rebuild and maintain the use and honor of the Tavola Ritonda with only the prowess of Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto. With this hope I took my comfort when so many of the others died on the high quest. Now I am all undone, and must do without the prowess, the beauty, and the courtesy of the world, he who always defended right against wrong. O noble Tristano, full of courtesy, what a great loss your death is to us all!"

Then Queen Ginevara and the other ladies made the greatest lament in the world, saying, "Alas, cruel and treacherous death, well may you exult in your great power, you who have felled Tristano, the cynosure of the world, and who have killed Queen Isotta, whose beauty surpassed all others, as did her courtesy and nobility."

At that Sir Dinadano got to his feet groaning and lamenting, weeping like a man gone mad, saying, "Alas, my lord King Artù, and all you other knights and barons, do not marvel if I suffer and make moan, for well you know that in a short time I have lost two of my brothers who were noble knights, and I have lost my father and many other companions, and never did I shed a tear for their going. But well I can see that the time has now

come to weep and to suffer and lament, and never again to be comforted, since all the prowess of the world has been consumed, and all the nobleness of chivalry, and the honor of all barons has been put down. Now beauty and courtesy and all the gentleness in the world has been diminished, and this is a grief that cannot be borne quietly. Now at once, without delay, we should ride to the kingdom of Cornovaglia in full company, to take high vengeance against the man who caused all this destruction."

Then Dinadano made such a loud lament that no one had ever heard a greater, and the king replied, "Dinadano, I know that you are wise, and for the good will you've shown I thank you, and so do all the others. But look, now is the time of great mourning; later will come the time of vengeance and cruelty, for it is true that we can have no mercy on one who has been guilty of such a great harm."

At that, the king had a beautiful text written, that is, a sermon or complaint called the royal lament, and that complaint he ordered to be sung in the style of a sermon in the great cathedral of the city, Santo Istefano's, every Monday morning for a year, and this lament was made to tell of the deaths of Sir Tristano and Queen Isotta.

And Queen Ginevara commissioned another, full of grief, and had it sung every Wednesday evening by boys and young maids in waiting. Sir Lancilotto himself wrote a third, and had it sung every Friday morning by boys and young men.

Then the king had Tristano's helmet, shield, and sword taken to the great church so that whoever saw them there would be reminded of him, and this was the first insignia that was ever put inside a church for the sake of chivalry. Above those things King Artù had hung a rich pennon on which Sir Tristano's arms were shown; that is, a blue field with a silver band, bordered on both sides by gold. Some say that Tristano carried a blue field with a golden lion for his sign, but it is clear that the other was what he wore on his own arms.

Know that the death of Sir Tristano caused great joy in certain countries among people who wanted to live without justice, and who were only waiting for his death to lay waste to all the countryside of Cornovaglia and Liones. And know that Tristano's protection while he lived was a great joy to all countries where the people were just, because through him they were given aid and defended against all wrong.

Some readers believe, though it is not affirmed, that Papa Dionido, the pope of Roma who ruled at that time as the forty-eighth after St. Pietro and who held the papacy twenty years and seventeen days, this Papa Dionido gave indulgences to anyone who would pray to God that Tristano would be granted a good life and a long one, so the land of Liones would not be left without a ruler, because King Meliadus had no other sons.

Similarly it is believed that Papa Agabito who came after Dionido and

who wore the mantle one year, three months, and eighteen days, did the same. And when he heard of the deaths of Tristano and Isotta, because he knew that their sin had been caused by enchantment and not by evil will, took compassion on them and offered indulgences to all who would pray for their souls.

Thus, it is possible to hope for them, because of the great trouble which they endured in this world which was not their own fault, and because they served and believed in the holy Christian faith. Also through the great mercy and forgiveness found in Cristo crucified, who redeemed us with his holy blessed blood, they may be saved.

Thus our book has given six reasons to read about Sir Tristano; that is, his ancestry, his birth, his deeds of chivalry, his falling in love, his death, and the great lament that was made for him. Next will be told the great vengeance that was made for his death.

CXXXIV.

Now know, my lords, that in the story it says when the dolorous news of the deaths of Sir Tristano and Queen Isotta reached King Amoroldo of Irlanda in the city of Vilin, he was the saddest king in the world. At once he sent messages, commands, and summons to all his barons and knights and all his friends, for he was then at the height of his power. He was king of Irlanda and Igrie, count of Bramat and duke of Aquitanie. He was the prince of Gaules and lord of Londres, the biggest city in the world, and he ruled a large part of Inghilterra; all of this he owed to the help of Sir Tristano.

When King Amoroldo had gathered all his people, he found that the flower of them all were 4600 knights, not counting others on horseback and on foot who were innumerable. Having gathered them all, King Amoroldo had many battleships constructed, and ships and boats of many kinds. He had them provisoned with biscuits and everything needed to sustain the lives of men and horses. Then he and all of his people boarded them, flying flags and pennons; the sails were unfurled and out they went onto the high sea, so that in nineteen days they came to the port of Tintoile. Here they disembarked and made camp four leagues outside of the city of Tintoile, beginning the siege, raising their standards and swearing never to leave without first conquering the kingdom and the city.

This also did King Governale of Liones, who came with his forces to the city of Tintoile and joined King Amoroldo's host. He had been Tristano's fosterfather; now he wanted to avenge his death. Thus the two kings together bound themselves to the high vendetta.

CXXXV.

The masters of the story say that King Artù, Sir Lancilotto, and the other knights errant were very sorrowful about the death of Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta. They knew that King Marco had killed Tristano, and they intended to make a high vendetta. At that point, King Artù, who knew the will of his knights and no longer wished to keep his own a secret, got to his feet, speaking to his people:

"My lords, the great mourning and sorrow which reigns in our hearts could cause us to be too slothful. Therefore, let it be known that without lingering more I intend to mount my horse in the morning and ride out of the city of Camellotto, never to return without first taking revenge for the loss of Tristano. We will take King Marco dead or alive, and I will visit the grave of my sweet Tristano and touch it with my right hand. Whoever will come with me will be very welcome.

"Therefore I command you, Sir Ivano, to send messages and mandates summoning all our friends, telling them that they must assemble as quickly as they can, in the country of Cornovaglia, before the city of Tintoile."

Sir Ivano did so, and Sir Lancilotto, Astore di Mare, Sir Calvano, Dinadano, and all the other knights errant were delighted with the undertaking. The next morning King Artù had the bells rung with hammers and the trumpets and cymbals sounded; at that signal all the barons armed themselves, mounted, and rode out of the city, and their banners and insignia were all of black.

They rode day after day, passing woods and fields and mountains, and in twenty-six days they entered the kingdom of Cornovaglia. When they reached Tintoile they found the city besieged by King Amoroldo and King Governale. They had put all of the castles and towns in the countryside to fire and sword, except the castle of Dinasso. They had been waging this war against King Marco ever since Tristano had died, three months and twelve days ago.

So then King Artù and his people made camp outside another part of the city; here they planted their standards and swore never to leave until they had the city and its people in their power. Thus they remained there for eight months, setting up siege machines, flinging fire and sulphur and other destructive things over the city walls.

King Marco, seeing himself so besieged and knowing who wanted revenge on him, was the saddest king in the world. He wept again for the death of Sir Tristano, the defender of his kingdom, and he cried for himself, for when he looked at what was being done outside he knew that he could not escape. At that point, for great remorse, he had his nephew Adriette beheaded, since he had been the first, middle, and final cause of Tristano's destruction.

The siege went on, and King Marco was running out of the food and drink necessary to life. Then he thought of a great subtlety which would be very effective if he could bring it off. He summoned all of his people, saying to them, "My lords, it will be better to fight on the field than to die of hunger within these walls."

Then he picked two knights and gave them a letter, and sent them out to the enemy host. When the two knights came before King Artù, they delivered their message and gave him the letter. The king opened it and had it read to find out what it said. It said this:

CXXXVI.

To you, my lord King Artù, head and lord of all knights errant, greatest and most powerful of kings, King Marco, the son of King Felissi, for the sake of mercy and pity kneels at your noble feet and bows to your consummate power. Not for my own deeds or past merit, but for the praise and honor of yourself and your crown, I ask that you do one of two things: either receive me in mercy and protect me and I will maintain the city in your name, or let me go and take the city, its holdings, and the kingdom for yourself. If you will not do this, then I ask that you take a third course. Now I find myself within these walls with 2800 knights and 8400 foot soldiers. If you will lead against me the same number of people, with no knights errant among them, I will join against you in battle; then, if I win, you must agree to go away."

King Artù, when he heard this, was very happy, and wrote back to King

Marco that in the morning he would send 1400 knights and 4200 foot soldiers all from the country of Irlanda, and that no one else would take arms. He said he was sending against him only half of the men he had asked for; that is, King Marco had asked for a man to each man, but King Artù would send only one man for two. "And," he said, "if we lose, we will raise the siege and go on our way, never to enter this kingdom again. But if we are the winners we will do with you and with your city whatever we please."

The two knights returned to King Marco and delivered this message. When the next day came, King Marco armed his people, on horseback and on foot, those from fifteen years old to one hundred. He assigned them two captains; one, called Sir Puerinero Turpin, he set over the people of Cornovaglia, and the other, Sir Traminore Dastrie, was in command of 600 knights sent by the king of Sansogna.

Then they created four divisions and sent them out, and King Marco acted as if he were going to ride out with them. But secretly he stayed in the city, in such a way that no one saw him. At that point, King Artù, who was captain general and leader of the besieging armies, saw King Marco's troops coming out of the city. He was very glad, because he believed that King Marco was there in person. Greatly he praised Marco's chivalry, for he had not believed that the city could hold so many people. Then he formed two companies of Irish knights, and gave them a bold knight for a captain, Sir Virgù of Londres. King Amoroldo could not take part, because he was a knight errant.

CXXXVII.

Now the story tells that when both sides were ready to fight the trumpet sounded once, twice, and on the third note all the people began their battle. At that point, King Governale, who was wise, armed himself and sixty knights who knew the entrances and exits of Tintoile. Secretly they mounted, then set themselves to watch over another part of the city where they knew there was a small gate. They concealed themselves nearby, to see what would happen.

Know that when the battle was at its height, King Marco, accompanied by two squires, rode out of the city leading three pack mules loaded with gold and silver, trying to escape. With great skill King Governale rode out of ambush and, as King Marco was escaping secretly, captured him, taking

him to his own pavilion where he was tightly bound and well guarded by twelve knights.

Meanwhile the knights of Cornovaglia were fighting the knights of Irlanda. The battle was hard and strong: so great was the clashing of lances and the unhorsing of knights that it was a marvel to see. After their lances broke they drew their swords and gave each other great blows until their armor hung in shreds on their backs and many people died on both sides. The Saxon knights then joined the battle, and the fighting lasted the better part of the day, but eventually King Marco's people were all killed. They could not flee back to the city, because before he left King Marco had locked the gates behind them.

When the knights of Sansogna and Cornovaglia were all dead, King Artù had the rest of his people armed to take the city. They took it easily, for there was no one left to defend it. When they entered, they found no one there except women, old men, and boys and girls, and they did not find King Marco, alive or dead.

When King Artù found out from someone in the city that King Marco had left, he was very disappointed, and so were Lancilotto and Amoroldo. They did not know where he was, and no one seemed to have done anything about it. As they were standing there all disconsolate about the disappearance of the king, here came King Governale and Sir Dinasso. They were accompanied by forty armed knights and in their midst was King Marco, bound on his palfrey. When Governale presented him to King Artù, Artù was the happiest king in the world.

At that point here came Sir Dinadano, who had taken part in the earlier battle incognito, and had killed more than 160 knights with his own hand. Well he had shown his prowess against this cowardly people for love of his loyal friend Sir Tristano; when he saw King Marco he knew who he was, because he had seen him many times, and he accosted him as he was getting down from his palfrey and struck him on the head. That blow was so heavy it would have killed the king if Artù had not parried and deflected it, so that it did not land true, but in doing it, King Artù was slightly wounded in the left arm.

When Amoroldo and Lancilotto and the other barons realized that this was King Marco, they all wanted him to be put to death, but King Artù would not let them do it, saying to King Governale, "You are truly to be praised that by your cleverness you have managed this, but you are greatly to blame that you brought this king before me alive. You know it is not fitting that I or any knight errant kill a man who is our prisoner, and for that I am the saddest king in the world because I cannot grant the wish of all these good people who took part in the battle. Their desire, and mine also, would be to see King Marco all dismembered, his flesh burnt, and his ashes thrown to the wind, but justice and the law of the knights errant will

not permit it. Since he is our prisoner, he may not be killed. Freely I give him to Amoroldo and Lancilotto to do with as they please, except that he must in no way die or be killed."

And he ordered that Dinadano be beheaded because he had struck King Marco, "Because I cannot pardon the injury to another, though I do pardon him for wounding me."

King Amoroldo, King Governale, and Sir Lancilotto said, "My lord, since you have pardoned Dinadano the wrong he did you, we will in no way allow him to die for the injury he has done King Marco. It was the great love he bears for Sir Tristano that made him do it."

But King Artù said, "Dinadano may in no way escape, unless King Marco himself will pardon his wrongdoing, for I will not falsify justice for any man alive."

Then Sir Lancilotto begged King Marco to forgive Dinadano, and King Marco said, "I would pardon him even if he had killed me. If I had thus pardoned the one for love of whom he struck me, I would not now be in such a terrible predicament."

So Dinadano was absolved, and King Amoroldo and Sir Lancilotto saw to it that King Marco's wound was treated. When he had recovered, they had a tower built in front of Tristano's sepulchre, the highest and the best that could be made, 880 feet high. On top of it was built an iron cage, and here it was that King Marco was imprisoned. They said that since he had not protected Tristano while his nephew was alive, he could watch over him now that he was dead. They left him to those who were put in charge, saying that as long as he lived he was to be given three kinds of meat in great abundance and good strong wine with no water, and that each month he was to have two changes of wool and linen clothing. They commanded that he not be given bread or soup or any other food, and that no one ever let him out of the cage, even if he were dead. And so it was done.

Thus King Marco lived thirty-two months, and it is said that he became so fat that no one had ever seen a fatter man; they say he died of fatness. It is the opinion of everyone who ever saw it that the tower still stands, and the king's bones are still inside the cage.

After King Marco was imprisoned, King Artù had it declared that all the people of Cornovaglia, that is the men from fifteen to eighty, were either dead or wounded, and that those who had escaped were banished from the realm on pain of death. Then he divided the city into four parts, and in each part he had a fortress built. One he gave to King Amoroldo, another to King Governale, the third to Lancilotto, and the fourth to Mordarette, his son; to those four he gave the whole kingdom of Cornovaglia.

The four of them made an agreement that Dinasso should be the city's lord. Then they buried all those who had been killed in battle, 476 of their own, and on King Marco's side, 2730.

Then King Artù, King Amoroldo, King Governale, and Sir Lancilotto went to visit Tristano's grave, and here they stayed from matins to vespers, continually making the greatest complaint and lament in the world. Still, theirs could not be so great that King Marco in his cage did not make a louder one.

Before King Artù departed, he sealed a kinship between King Amoroldo and Sir Calvano his nephew; that is, King Amoroldo took as his wife a sister of Sir Calvano because Queen Vermiglia, his first wife, had died. Afterwards, each king, count, and baron returned to his own country; and now the story stops telling about the high vendetta made for Sir Tristano, and begins to tell of the destruction of the Tavola Ritonda.

CXXXVIII.

The true story tells that when King Artù and Sir Lancilotto had gone back to the city of Camellotto, having taken high vengeance for the death of Sir Tristano, all the barons were at peace and there was a noble concord among them. But none of them wanted to go out adventuring any more, and they exhausted themselves just by living luxuriously within the city. They did this for three reasons: first, because the king commanded it, since he thought they seemed tired out; then, because many were dismayed by the death of Sir Tristano and the loss of so many on the high quest; and third, because they were no longer feared since their reputations were lessened.

So the knights did not set out on adventures, but enjoyed themselves and were at leisure. They had good times, and thought of nothing else but their own pleasures. From an excess of leisure, their prowess diminished, and other shameful things occurred. Some of them began to want things belonging to others. For let it be known that too much ease and softness results principally in three things, that is, luxury, avarice, and anger, or rather, pride: one who thinks only of pleasure wants always to know where it is coming from, and fears that it will become less; because of this he becomes irritable, arrogant, envious, and proud. One who does no work becomes luxurious and lives basely.

That is what happened to the knights of the Tavola Ritonda. Some lived in their own castles, and had beautiful gardens made; some stayed in the city and built beautiful palaces and then wanted to build others. Some gathered money and wanted still more; some made love to their own ladies

and desired others. While all these loved their money, their palaces or castles, Sir Lancilotto thought of nothing else but how to take his pleasure with Queen Ginevara, and have with her good times and great delight. There were rumors about this throughout the city.

After a while, the King of Norgales made war against the King of Irlanda, sending for all of his friends to besiege the castle of Lerlinte on the great plain of Bucifalaso. This is something he never would have done if Tristano were alive. When the King of Norgales went to war, Lancilotto and his kinsmen came to his support, and as they were gathered outside the castle King Amoroldo of Irlanda came against them with all his people, pitching camp nearby. Then Sir Calvano, Sir Gariette, and all the kinsmen of King Lotto came to the aid of King Amoroldo.

The two sides confronted each other, and the King of Norgales demanded that King Amoroldo join battle with him, and Amoroldo consented gladly. On the third day each king gathered his troops, and the trumpets sounded on both sides. All the men began to fight a great and dangerous battle.

And here began the destruction of all chivalry, because King Amoroldo killed the King of Norgales, and Lancilotto killed Amoroldo and cut off his head. Here died the King of a Hundred Knights who was fighting for King Amoroldo, and here died 1600 worthy knights. The field was won by Sir Lancilotto, and the king of Scozia and his people, but they had not taken the castle. It remained as it was before, and a bad day it was when that castle was built, for it was always involved in some war. Then Sir Lancilotto and his people returned to Camellotto, and so did Sir Calvano and his men.

CXXXIX.

The true story tells that as King Artù and the barons dwelt at Camellotto, Sir Lancilotto's love for Queen Ginevara never diminished, but grew ever more ardent than before. Sir Calvano, who hated Sir Lancilotto because he had killed King Amoroldo, constantly defamed Sir Lancilotto and the queen, so that because of these rumors King Artù came to hate Sir Lancilotto and would not speak to him. Because he was shunned like this, Sir Lancilotto did not come to court.

In his absence, Lancilotto was even more inflamed with desire for Queen Ginevara, and she, when she could no longer see or speak to him, was the saddest lady in the world. Neither one of them thought of anything else

but of how they might be together. After a while Sir Lancilotto arranged with Sir Astore di Mare, Sir Bordo and other knights of his family to go and live at Gioiosa Guardia, since King Artù and the kinsmen of King Lotto would not leave them alone. According to this plan, they armed themselves and mounted and rode all together until they reached Gioiosa Guardia. Here they lived in great happiness, giving pleasure and courteous welcome to all who came by.

But Sir Lancilotto grew very melancholy because he had not seen Queen Ginevara for such a long time, and day and night he thought of nothing but of how he could see her again. Still, he could not think of her so much that she did not think of him even more; it had come to such a pass that she could not eat by day or sleep by night. She went neither to feasts nor to confession, saying this: "Since I cannot see the one I love most, I do not want others to see me."

And so King Artù could have neither joy nor solace. Thus matters stood for a while, until the queen wrote a letter with her own hand and sent it to Lancilotto by one she truly trusted. This young man rode to Gioiosa Guardia and met Lancilotto, giving him the letter on behalf of Queen Ginevara. Lancilotto opened it to find out what it said. It said this:

CXL.

To the angelic face, my dear love, my sweet comfort and dearest hope, object and comfort of my desiring heart, noble and pleasing rose, your Ginevara greets you in the desire and pleasure of love. I know that you are wise enough to understand the way and know the condition I can—or should—be in without you.

"For you ought to know that since you left me I have not had one good day, but have been always lamenting and sorrowful because I am not near you. Thus will I be until I can see you again. Therefore, Lancilotto, I send for you, my dear delight, praying that nothing can keep you from coming to speak with me at the palace of Sir Agravale, outside the lustral gate."

When Lancilotto had read that letter, he armed himself without delay, mounting together with four of his knights. They left Gioiosa Guardia with swords at their sides, but without lances, disguised as merchants; they rode so that in a day and a night they reached the palace. That same evening he sent to Queen Ginevara to let her know that he had arrived, and the

queen could not sleep all that night, she wanted so badly for the next day to come.

When day finally came, she dressed herself in fine silken robes and said to King Artù that she wanted to amuse herself by walking outside a little. Then, accompanied by a number of ladies, she went out of the city. When they reached the palace, she sent most of her ladies away, telling them that she wanted to stay a little to rest. She kept no one with her except four ladies in whom she had the most trust.

Inside the palace hall, she met Lancilotto and was very happy. At once they embraced each other and went to rest in a rich bed, where they took great solace.

As the other ladies were returning to the city they met Sir Calvano, who was out hunting with some other knights. He asked them where they had been that morning, and one of the ladies answered him, saying that they had accompanied Queen Ginevara to that palace, where she had stayed, commanding that they come back for her at vespers.

Then Sir Calvano became very suspicious, saying to himself, "Lancilotto must be there with her." He rode in that direction, and when he was near the palace, to find out for sure whether Lancilotto was there he let go a falcon which he had held on his fist, and sent it to light on the palace balcony. Then he commanded his squire to go after it, and see if Lancilotto was inside.

The squire went that way and, finding the door locked, called and knocked until it was opened for him. Then he went to the balcony and took the falcon. Returning to Sir Calvano, he said there was no one in the palace except four knights that he had never seen before. Then Calvano thought that Ginevara must be with Lancilotto in one of the rooms of the palace.

They rode back to the city at once, where Calvano found King Artù and secretly told him all that had happened, and how he strongly believed that Lancilotto was with Queen Ginevara in Agravale's palace. The king was very sad because he firmly believed that what Calvano said was true, for Ginevara would not have gone out so early, so lavishly dressed, without good cause, as it was not her custom to dress up so early in the day. The king wanted to arm himself and all of his people at once and ride out to the palace.

But Sir Calvano said, "King Artù, take my advice. Don't let your people know about this, because so many of them love Lancilotto they might prevent our undertaking. My brothers and I will arm ourselves and ride there secretly; I swear to you that we will bring you Lancilotto, alive or dead." Then the king answered that he was pleased with that. Sir Calvano armed himself, and had Gariette, Gariens, and Agravano arm themselves along with some sixty bold knights all of his own household. Secretly they mounted and rode out of the city toward the palace, three miles outside the wall. Finding the door locked, they knocked and called out for it to be opened.

Hearing this, Lancilotto was deeply grieved. At once, with his four knights, he armed and mounted, saying, "If we stay here any longer, our plight will be worse."

Then they rode out of the main door of the palace, swords in hand, and began to fight.

The first man Lancilotto encountered was Sir Agravano; he hit him with his sword sending him dead to the ground. Then he killed Gariens, and eight other noble knights. Though the battle did not last long, it was very furious. At the end of it, Sir Calvano fled, and Lancilotto put Queen Ginevara on a horse and left in great haste for Gioiosa Guardia, accompanied only by one knight, for the other three had been killed in the battle. Lancilotto himself was badly wounded. They rode day and night until they came to Gioiosa Guardia, and here they rested and took their pleasure. And Lancilotto had the castle furnished with provisions, and reinforced it, and had it well guarded.

CXLI.

The true story tells that when King Artù found out that Lancilotto had taken Ginevara and had killed his two nephews he was the saddest king in the world. He sent out to summon all of his allies, gathering at Camellotto 6800 knights and a great multitude of foot soldiers. Then he provided tents, wagons, and pavilions, and all the food they would need, and they all rode out of the city.

They rode day after day until they reached Gioiosa Guardia; here they positioned the army and prepared the siege, swearing that they would never leave until they had the fortress and the queen at their mercy.

The siege lasted four months. Lancilotto and his kinsmen, inside with 460 noble knights, cared little for King Artù and his forces, for they had enough provisions to hold out for more than two years. The raids and the attacks were very thick, and many people died on both sides, but King Artù's people were harmed more by ten to one than those from inside, because Lancilotto and his men attacked often, by day and by night.

When the siege had lasted six months, Sir Ivano went many times to speak with Sir Lancilotto, trying to convince him to free himself from sin and make amends for the wrong he had done, to give the castle and the queen back to King Artù. At first Lancilotto would not agree to it, especially not to

giving up the castle, but Sir Ivano argued so justly and persuaded him so well that Lancilotto finally agreed to this much: He would surrender the castle and the queen to King Artù on the conditions that the king would agree to pardon him his wrongdoing and agree to hold the queen as dear as ever before.

Then Lancilotto and his kinsmen came out of the castle and went to Gaules, where Lancilotto reclaimed Benoich, his own city. He had it proclaimed throughout all the countries that whoever wanted to come there to live would be freed from taxes and levies for ten years. Because of this, many people came to live there, and Sir Lancilotto received them kindly and had many castles built round about. Here Sir Lancilotto remained, and led a good life.

CXLII.

Now in this part the story says that King Artù, remaining in command of Gioiosa Guardia, entered the castle and met Queen Ginevara with mercy and loved her as before. But Sir Calvano then approached him, saying, "My lord King Artù, you ought never to be happy since Lancilotto killed your two nephews, two such good and noble knights. If you will take my advice you will take such vengeance against Sir Lancilotto and his kin that you will never need to fear them again. If you don't, he will take the queen away from you once more, and bring you even more shame and dishonor.

And King Artù, who feared that Lancilotto would return to court openly or in secret, told Sir Calvano that he was prepared to follow his advice and take whatever steps he might counsel. Calvano said, "Have Gioiosa Guardia torn down, castle and fortress, so Lancilotto and his men will no longer have a place to retreat to. Then, with all your people, a great and noble number, you should ride to Gaules and to the city of Benoich, which is not very strong, and lay siege to it. It is certain that you will take it soon, for it cannot hold out against your great power, and soon Lancilotto will be in your hands. Then you will have the right to take vengeance on him for the great shame and great harm he has done you."

The king agreed to all this, and had Gioiosa Guardia torn down so that no one could live there at all, and then returned with all his people to the city of Camellotto. When they had rested for two months he sent out a proclamation to say that all the people should follow him. He sent for all his allies and left his son Mordarette as viceroy and king in Camellotto,

to rule there until his return, charging him with the care of Ginevara, his stepmother.

Then with all his people he left the city and rode one day after another until they reached the city of Benoich. Here they set tents, wagons, and pavilions, and here they raised their flag. Almost all of those around the castle were ready to surrender at once out of fear; the fighting was heavy, and many people were killed. When the siege had lasted three months, Lancilotto, inside, still had a great many men. But wisely he sent to King Artù to ask that he have the goodness, to prevent any more people's being killed on either side, to let the war be decided this way: that he send to the field one knight for his champion to fight with Lancilotto himself. If he lost, he would give up the city and surrender himself as prisoner, but if he were the winner the king would raise the siege and go on his way, swearing never to return under any conditions.

When King Artù received this message, Sir Calvano leaped to his feet, saying to the king, "I want to be the knight who enters the field against Sir Lancilotto. I will do this to vindicate my shame and your great dishonor And I want the battle to be in the morning, so that by midday one of us will be the victor, and the other will lie dead on the field."

Be it known that Sir Calvano did not say this without good reason; the height of his power came in the hours between tierce and sext, when he had three times his natural strength. The king agreed, and when the messenger returned Lancilotto was very happy with the news because he had thought how to manage it so that Calvano's virtue and power would not be worth very much.

Now the story stops speaking of Sir Lancilotto and King Artù, and tells about King Mordarette.

CXLIII.

The story tells that Sir Mordarette stayed behind in Camellotto with many barons and knights. He often talked with Queen Ginevara; they ate and drank together and kept a court; then from so much intimacy and conversation Mordarette fell in love with Queen Ginevara, his stepmother, and many times begged her for her love.

She did not want to consent for anything in the world, but Mordarette prodded her so and gave her so much trouble until it was apparent that,

by force or by courtship, he would have her. When she saw that she could not escape without shame, not wanting in any way to consent, she said to him cunningly, "Mordarette, since nothing will please you but to have my love, I am willing to be yours if we may take our delight at the castle of Urbano. There you may have me, and do all your will."

Mordarette answered that this suited him well. When this agreement was made, Queen Ginevara with forty good knights in whom she had perfect trust rode to the castle, four leagues outside the city. When they were inside, at once she had the bridges raised and the gates locked tight, telling the people of the castle, who were faithful to her, about the deed that Mordarette had planned against her and against King Artù, his father.

The people of the castle arranged it so that when Mordarette arrived they would have great tiles and stones to throw down on him, and by this good bombardment keep him away from the castle. When the next day came, King Mordarette with a few of his confidantes rode out to join Queen Ginevara; when he reached the castle he found the gates locked and the bridges lifted. He was told that if he valued his life, he was not to approach the gates.

Then King Mordarette, with fierce pride, rode back to the city to arm himself and all his people. He returned to the castle at once and pitched camp outside, swearing never to leave without first having the queen and the castle in his power. His people swore to stay by him for life or death and never to abandon him, and they did this because of King Mordarette's great joyfulness and courtesy.

For know that the man who would rule others must have four qualities if he wants to be feared and obeyed. The first is that he defend righteousness and justice, and not be a tyrant; the second is that he be even-tempered, loyal and courteous; the third is that he be pleasant to everyone and never insulting, and the fourth is that he be bold and eager and sure to defend himself and others, that is, that he be an arbiter between good and evil. If he practices these four things, he should reign justly and be victorious, for a bold lord keeps his people secure, the courteous lord keeps them loyal, and the kind lord keeps them faithful.

The queen, besieged by King Mordarette, wrote a letter and sent it by messenger to King Artù, who was camped outside the city of Benoich. Here the battle arranged between Sir Calvano and Sir Lancilotto was about to take place. Each of them had armed himself to great advantage, and had come to the place where the battle was to be. When the two knights met, they challenged each other, then attacked vigorously with their lances, giving two such heavy blows that both lances shattered. Then the knights took their swords and began a cruel battle, exchanging many strong blows. Lancilotto skillfully tried to get Calvano into a great argument, only until the hour of sext should pass and Calvano would lose the great power and strength

he had until then. Lancilotto said, "Alas, Sir Calvano, for courtesy, what has moved King Artù to want to destroy me entirely? For I know well that he would not come against me without a reason. It ought to be enough that he has taken Gioisa Guardia from me and had it torn down—I will never be consoled for that. You, Calvano: this is your fault. You are a knight errant, and ought not fight unjustly; you know that when I surrendered Gioiosa Guardia to the king he pardoned me all his ill will."

Sir Calvano answered, "Lancilotto, it doesn't seem to me unjust to fight you when you have killed my two brothers. But, by my faith, before midday I expect to have taken high vengeance for that deed!"

But Lancilotto continued to excuse himself and prolong the battle, saying, "Calvano, if I killed your brothers, I was forced to, for I killed them to defend myself. I am sorry for it, and sad and miserable, for if I had not gotten caught up in such madness I am sure that I would be King Artù's friend, and I would not have lost Gioiosa Guardia, the greatest treasure I had in this world."

Then Sir Calvano, seeing that the hour of noon had come, challenged Lancilotto, saying, "Knight, your excuses will do you no good now, for we are at war."

Then they gave each other such heavy blows that their shields broke off their arms, and their hauberks were all shredded and their flesh showed through, stained with blood and sweat. Sir Lancilotto was always asking for respite, but Sir Calvano would not agree to it, for he wanted to bring the fight to an end at that moment. Lancilotto was working hard, and it seemed to him that he would lose if he did not delay some more. Know that Sir Bordo, Lionello, Astore di Mare, Sir Briobris, and the other knights of his company were afraid that Lancilotto would lose the encounter, for they saw that Sir Calvano was leading him all around the field, to the left, to the right, anywhere he liked, hitting him so hard that it did not seem possible that Lancilotto could stand any more. But there was nothing else to do except defend himself until the hour of noon had passed; after that he was pretty sure he could avenge the great fierceness Sir Calvano had shown toward him. Here one could say that cleverness was worth more than strength, for the battle lasted thus until they were both in great need of rest, so they pulled back and rested a while.

Then Sir Calvano summoned Lancilotto back to the battle, and Lancilotto said, "Alas, Sir Calvano, I ask you for courtesy to let our fight be ended. I will keep the castle of Benoich and the country under King Artù, with whatever tribute he sees fit to impose. What is done cannot be undone; in the future, I will serve you and honor you in every way I know how."

But Calvano answered him, "Lancilotto, be assured that between you and me there can be neither peace nor concord, except what we make for ourselves

with our sharp swords. Defend yourself, for you will soon be in your grave. Expect no other peace from me."

The knights had stood thus talking for some time when Lancilotto, looking at the sky, saw that the sun had passed its zenith and the hour of noon was gone. Then he took comfort, and attacked Sir Calvano, saying, "If the sharp sword is to make peace between you and me, now we are at the proof of it."

Then they began again to exchange great blows, and each one struck the other with such great vigor that in a short time they were both covered with wounds, and the earth where they fought was stained with their blood. But Sir Calvano's stokes became weaker and weaker because the hour of noon had passed, and Lancilotto struck fiercely, not acting as humble as he had before. When Sir Calvano realized that his hour had passed and that he was tiring fast, he feared for his life and said to Sir Lancilotto, "Since you said that you would hold the castle under King Artù, I am well pleased, and I will receive you in love and courtesy. All I ask is that you come before King Artù and swear that you are his to command."

"Don't do me such courtesy," said Lancilotto, "for I am going to treat you just like I did your brothers."

At that, the battle became exceedingly furious, and Calvano said to Lancilotto, "Of two things, do one: let us quit this battle and King Artù can find another champion to take my place against you, or let us postpone our fight until morning."

But Lancilotto said, "Look, Calvano, of your two choices I pick neither. But I offer you a third choice—either surrender yourself my prisoner, or defend yourself."

Then the two noble knights did such deeds of arms that it was impossible to see, for each one grew stronger out of fear of his great need. Then Sir Lancilotto gathered all the strength he had left and struck Calvano such a blow on his helmet that he cut through to the brain, and sent him to earth, terribly wounded. Afterwards, as you will hear, Sir Calvano died of that wound.

CXLIV.

The story masters tell that on the same day as the battle between Lancilotto and Calvano, a messenger approached King Artù and told him how Mordarette his son had besieged Ginevara in the castle of Urbano because he wanted her in his power. King Artù became very sad at this news, and immediately had all his tents and pavilions taken down, ceasing the attack on Lancilotto and his kinsmen, and turning back with all his people toward the city of Camellotto.

Riding along the way they encountered a great baron, a friend of Lancilotto, who was called Sir Turinoro. He was the count of Cartagina, and brother of Sir Perifiles, the Papa at Roma. He had in his company 600 bold knights, and was on his way to help Sir Lancilotto against King Artù, because it was Lancilotto who had knighted him in the city of Metteva.

When Sir Turinoro and his people realized that these were King Artù's men, they attacked at once. Each side fought the other furiously, and Sir Calvano handled himself very well here, in what was a harsh and heavy battle. Sir Turinoro rode through the fray, doing great harm to the king's people until he met Sir Calvano. Then the two of them attacked each other, swords in hand. But Sir Turinoro struck Calvano a great blow on his helmet, his good sword falling in just the same place as Lancilotto's had in the fight before. And so it was that Sir Turinoro's blow was heavy enough to send Calvano dead to the earth.

When he saw his nephew dead, King Artù bathed his face with tears and then, to avenge him, attacked Sir Turinoro. They fought together furiously; then because of the good support King Artù had from his people Sir Turinoro was killed with all his men, but more than 100 men were killed on King Artù's side. Afterwards, the king had Sir Calvano's body brought to Camellotto, and had him buried with great honor.

After that, the king delayed no more, but rode at once to the castle of Urbano with all his people, sending a message to Mordarette and the people with him that they must leave the castle immediately. But Mordarette would not; he readied his troops and rode against King Artù, his father. The battle was furious, and almost all of the people on both sides were killed: almost all of the knights errant died here.

But King Mordarette was the victor. King Artù was put to flight, badly wounded, accompanied only by Sir Ivano and a squire. They fled until they came to the edge of the sea. There Sir Ivano, who was wounded in three places, fell down dead, and at this King Artù made the greatest lament in the world. Then the king pulled out his sword and put it in his squire's hand, commanding that he throw it into the sea. The squire argued with him,

because the sword was very beautiful, and the king had to command him three times. Finally the squire threw it, and he saw an arm reach out of the water and catch the sword, brandishing it three times before taking it under the sea, never to be seen again.

After a little, over the water there came a small ship covered in white samite. When the king saw it, he said to his squire, "Now my end has come."

The ship approached the king, and some arms reached out of it, taking the king and visibly putting him into the ship, which carried him away over the sea. The squire, astonished, stood there as long as he could see the ship, then left and went to tell about the marvel. As it happened, people believed that Fata Morgana came by magic in that ship and took the king to an island in the sea. There he died of his wounds, and there the fairy buried him, so they say.

CXLV.

Now the story tells that King Mordarette went on besieging the castle, after he had killed or routed King Artù and his men. His sin had so blinded him that he never ceased his evil will, or stopped wanting to have the queen in his power. The besieged queen, seeing herself in such a predicament, continually made a great lament, weeping for King Artù, for she did not know whether he was alive or dead. And she wept because she saw that all of her knights were being killed, and wept for herself, because she was in danger and had no one to defend her.

Then she summoned a page in whom she had great faith and sent him to Lancilotto, praying that he bring her help. Finding Lancilotto, the boy delivered her message; without delay Lancilotto mounted and with all the knights he had left rode until he reached the castle at Urbano.

As he neared, he sent to tell King Mordarette that he could do one of two things: either he could raise the siege, or he could prepare to fight. When Mordarette got this message he readied his troops at once, and when the trumpets sounded on both sides all the knights attacked. When their lances shattered they reached for their swords, and so great was the noise of the blows and the combat of knights that it was impossible to believe.

Then Lancilotto encountered Mordarette and gave him a heavy blow on the helmet, sending him dead to the ground. The battle lasted most of the day, and nearly all of the people on both sides were killed, but Lancilotto

held the field. After he had had all the dead buried, he entered the castle and found the queen, who was greatly grieving. Lancilotto himself was the most wretched knight in the world, for he had seen all of chivalry destroyed.

As they stayed there, that evening the squire came who had been with King Artù on the sea shore. He told the queen and Sir Lancilotto how the mortally wounded king had gone over the sea, and that he believed he was dead. When the queen heard these words, she realized that she had been the cause of so much evil and was overcome with remorse. So sharp was her sorrow that it cut her heart in two, and suddenly she fell down dead.

When he saw this, Lancilotto was the saddest knight in the world. He had the queen buried with great honors in a beautiful sepulchre, and on a column there he had inscribed all that had happened between King Artù, King Mordarette, and Queen Ginevara. He also had inscribed the date, that is, that King Artù and the knights of the Tavola were destroyed in the 399th year.

Afterwards, alone and unarmed, he entered the wilderness of Andernantes and came to an abbey, where he found Bordo, Astore di Mare, and Briobris, who were there to do penance. Lancilotto stayed with them to do penance for his own sins. He lived a year and three months, becoming a priest and singing mass, then he died and passed out of this life.

Thus ended the power of the Tavola Ritonda and the knights errant. No one was found after them who wanted to maintain or hold the same customs; none was found who would undertake adventures to set himself or others free. On the contrary the few people who were left after the death of King Artù abandoned the city of Camellotto and the country around it; all of them left and went back to their own land.

So ends our book and with it all the stories, the chivalry, the adventures, the battles, and the tournaments made by the knights errant. And it has been shown here how to King Uter Pandragon, who carried arms of gold and blue squares, or, it is sometimes said, a blue field with golden stars, there was born King Artù; to King Bando of Benoich, who bore a silver field with two red bands, was born Sir Lancilotto and his kinsmen; to King Meliadus of Liones, who claimed a blue field with a silver band bordered with gold on both sides, and who is said also to have carried a golden lion, there was born Sir Tristano. To King Scalabrino, whose insignia were all black, was born Palamidesso, and from King Lotto, who bore white and red quarters, came Calvano, Agravano, Gariette, and Gariens. To King Pellinoro, who carried a black mountain on a white field, were born Sir Prezzivale, Amorotto, Landriano, and Agravale, while to the king of Orbellanda was left Brunoro the Black, Dinadano, and Daniello, who carried a golden field with a green serpent. And of all the other knights of the Tavola Vecchia and the Tavola Nuova, each one carried his own arms.

And now our book comes to an end, by the grace of God, *per omnia secula seculorum, amen.*

Here ends
the Book of the Tavola Vecchia
and the Tavola Nuova.

Amen.

Notes

1. It is fascinating to watch the motifs shift around. In Chrétien's *Lancelot*, the original cart was disgraceful in itself, but Lancelot, embodying the perfect humility of the lover, rides in it to find his lady. In the story of Gurone, the cart has become a punishment for the disgrace to knighthood of losing one's lady.

2. This is the first of numerous moral proverbs, sayings, and short sermons which appear throughout the *Tavola*, and which often contradict the behavior illustrated in the story.

3. The tribute in the poems is limited to boys and girls. The *Tristan en prose* adds horses; the *Tavola* adds a zoo.

4. These, of course, are two stories usually attached to Perceval.

5. The authors of the *Tavola* will not wait for *entrelacement* when they have a chance to praise Tristano. He will finish this adventure left incomplete by Lancilotto in chapter 60.

6. This is the shortest adventure in the *Tavola*.

7. Taken verbatim from Polidori. Since I have found no one who can translate them, I assume they are nonsense syllables.

8. What proud deeds? This must be a line from another story.

9. The epithet "Courteous" (*cortege o cortese*) is Polidori's emendation. The text has *cordoglio*, "sorrow."

10. Notice the contradiction between this and the assertion on the preceding page that a person *should* boast.

11. My emendation. The word is *scaggiale*, translated by Gardner as "girdle."

12. My emendation. The phrase is *bene intagliato di sua membra*, "well-cut of his limbs," which I assume means long-legged enough to sit a horse well. It occurs frequently, and I have usually translated it as "tall" or "well made."

13. The contradictions in this passage seem to reflect the clash between epic and romance attitudes toward love.

14. A knight of the Round Table's demanding tribute from a weaker nation seems a serious breach of the vow to protect. The effect of it is to emphasize Tristano as a force for courtesy even beyond that upheld in Artù's court.

15. When Lancilotto was knighted (chapter 6) it was stated that no one received a sword until he was twenty-five. Apparently the Cornish custom is different.

16. Compare chapter 13, where the book is said to have belonged to "Sir Viero di Guascogna" instead of to "Sir Piero, Count of Savoia." All subsequent mentions, however, assign it to Sir Piero.

17. The term is *damare*, "to crown," from Checkers.

18. This marriage is unique to Italian prose versions, and shows the social emphasis of the *Tavola*. Ferrante, p. 42.

19. This is the tower in which King Meliadus had been enchanted when his son Tristano was born.

20. I have left out a translation for the word *arnicolo*, because I could not find one.

21. This is recognizable as the name Tristan hides under on his journey to Ireland in the verse romances.

22. In this there is a suggestion of the Venus and Adonis myth, and the legendary matriarchal societies in which the queen's consort is killed and replaced yearly.

23. This is one of three undeveloped mentions given the Orkney-Pellinore feud, one of the most important events in Malory's *Book of Sir Tristram*. See also chapters 89 and 102.

24. The faulty arithmetic is in the manuscript. Polidori, p. 323. note 3.

25. Nothing comes of this, but it is a suggestive taboo.

26. The Italian is *miga*, not crazy "a crumb."

27. The sumptuousness of the cavalcade is peculiar to the *Tavola*.

28. This, the culminating event of Malory's *Sir Tristam*, has apparently taken place off-stage.

29. This tale apparently derives from Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*.

30. Here begins the most obscure and difficult passage in the *Tavola*.

31. It has long been thought that this quality of Calvano's (Gawain) links him to an ancient sun deity: his response to and lack of success in the quest for the grail also suggests such a connection.

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